Mattapoisett Rail Trail, Mattapoisett

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

WWII Veterans Memorial Trail, Mansfield

Quequechan River Rail Trail, Fall River

Kilmer Avenue, Taunton

SEPTEMBER 2023

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
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Transportation Staff:

Jonathan Gray, Transportation Planner - Principal Contributer
Lisa Estrela-Pedro, Transportation Planning Manager
Jacqueline Jones, AICP, Assistant Director of Transportation Planning
Jennifer Chaves, Assistant Director of Transportation Data and GIS
Lilia Cabral-Bernard, (former) Senior Transportation Planner/TitleVI Coordinator
Sara Brown, Principal Planner
Luis de Oliveira, Senior Transportation Planner
Sean Hilton, Senior Transportation Planner
Andrea Duarte, Transportation Outreach Coordinator
Joseph Osborne, Transportation Planner

Additional Staff:

Helen Zincavage, AICP, CFM, Manager of Environmental Programs
Kevin Ham, Homeland Security Program Manager/ FAA-Certified Drone Pilot

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10 Park Plaza, Suite 3800, Boston, MA 02116
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Email: MassDOT.CivilRights@state.ma.us

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Introduction

Over the past several decades, investments in bicycle infrastructure, popularity of shared use paths, increasing availability of electric bicycles (ebikes), and a growing awareness of the environmental and health benefits of biking have all helped to grow interest in bicycle transportation in the region. An ever-growing body of research shows that cycling infrastructure reduces vehicle congestion, crashes, and GHG emissions — the leading source of climate pollution in both Massachusetts and the Unites States. The research further shows that cycling infrastructure improves the local environment by reducing noise and air pollution, enhances natural habitats and ecosystems, encourages healthy lifestyles, reduces healthcare spending, contributes to household savings, and generates revenue for local businesses and governments.

However, Southeastern Massachusetts' current bicycle network is fragmented in many areas, with large gaps within and between communities. These gaps lacking safe cycling infrastructure stifle more significant growth in bike ridership that could be realized once the regional network achieves a high degree of connectivity. Southeastern Massachusetts has many bike riders who are interested in cycling more frequently for everyday trips but are concerned for their safety in the absence of sufficient high-comfort bikeways in their community. The Regional Bicycle Plan public survey found that 63% of respondents that rarely or never ride a bicycle cited unsafe road conditions and lack of access to safe cycling infrastructure in their community as the reason for their infrequent cycling. The Regional Bicycle Plan envisions a safe, connected, and regionwide bicycle network that will enable significant growth in bike ridership.

One of the central challenges in strengthening the regional bike network is the time and funding needed to plan, design, and build new shared use paths. The important work of planning shared use paths and other protected bikeways in the region often requires a grassroots group of thoughtful and committed citizens in the community advocating for pedestrians and cyclists. Persistence in planning efforts by local municipal staff and bicycle and pedestrian committees has proven key to the successful construction of cycling infrastructure in the region, and their work has inspired this regional vision which continues to advance each year.

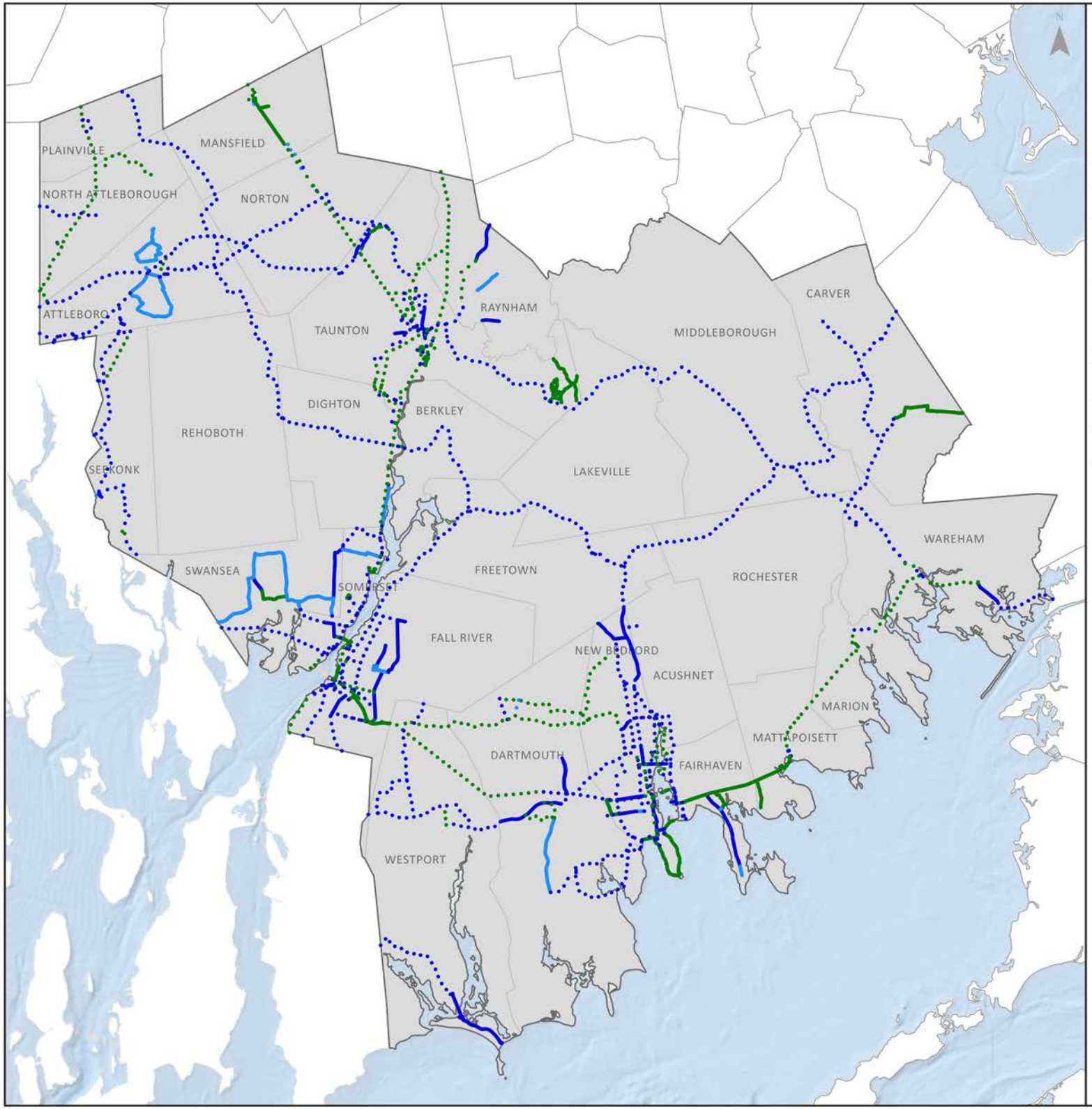
The Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization's (SMMPO's) Regional Bicycle Plan strives to answer three core questions – why is bicycle transportation a sound investment for Southeastern Massachusetts, what do we currently have in place, and what can we do to equitably increase bicycling opportunities in the region?

Building upon our previous Regional Bicycle Plan, a consideration of the needs of bicyclists in the region, and local, statewide, and national objectives, the following goals were identified for this plan:

Regional Bicycle Plan Goals	
	1. Improve the ability of bike users of all ages and abilities to safely, comfortably, and conveniently travel across the region
	2. Prioritize connections that would enhance bikeability for underserved and vulnerable populations
	3. Improve public health outcomes through the advancement of bicycling infrastructure
	4. Reduce total vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions by advancing bike networks and infrastructure
	5. Support community connectivity and economic development through the advancement of bicycle routes and infrastructure in the region
	6. Advance the development of the regional bicycle network by increasing capacity, resources, and funding for projects
	7. Increase community engagement, local awareness, and public support for bicycle networks and infrastructure

The Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Bicycle Plan is a planning document created and endorsed by the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO), which is the agency responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation planning process for the 27 communities that comprise the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). All planning work completed by SMMPO/SRPEDD staff is accomplished in a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process that develops a vision for transportation in the region. This process and the resulting plans completed by the SMMPO help to decide how to allocate approximately $25+ million in federal and state transportation funds annually across the region.

The vision established by the SMMPO, with the critical guidance from the Joint Transportation Planning Group, is integral to each of the certification documents that the SMMPO is required to produce: the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Cooperatively selecting transportation programs and projects for funding is the main role of the SMMPO. To learn more about the work of the SMMPO and how you can get involved in the regional transportation planning process, explore the wealth of plans, programs, and technical assistance available through the SRPEDD Transportation Planning Department.



Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

Sources: SRPEDD, MassGIS, ESRI
Date: October 2023
Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes.

Equity and Bicycling

Transportation is an important social determinant of health that affects the ability of people to move efficiently and safely to meet a variety of needs. Across the United States, people with low incomes and people of color are more dependent on bicycling than wealthier and whiter populations.[1] Low-income populations have a more limited ability to own, fuel, and maintain a car. Limited transportation options have negative impacts on many facets of individuals' lives and are a major barrier to economic and social mobility, limiting access to and choice over jobs, schools, healthcare, food, socialization, and other amenities. Limited mobility has led to 3.2 million children in the U.S. per year missing or foregoing medical appointments, and in Massachusetts, almost half of Latinx populations regularly prioritize transportation costs over other necessities.[2]

Recently, federal efforts to identify and mitigate disparate impact of transportation projects have increased. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) adopted the Justice40 Initiative to address gaps and decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities.3 Justice40 seeks to direct at least 40 percent of the benefits of DOT grants, programs and initiatives to disadvantaged communities. DOT is expanding data tools, grants, guidelines, and technical assistance opportunities to "identify and prioritize projects that benefit rural, suburban, tribal, and urban communities facing barriers to affordable, equitable, reliable, and safe transportation" and "assess the negative impacts of transportation projects and systems on disadvantaged communities and will consider if local community leaders have been consulted in a meaningful way during [a] project's development."

The cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle is simply not accessible to all income levels. Bicycle transportation is one of the most equitable forms of transportation since it is far more affordable than owning and operating a vehicle, offers a wider travel range than walking, and can provide a viable transportation option in areas without public transit services. In areas with public transit service, bicycles can provide faster access to transit than walking and help to fill gaps in transit networks particularly when bicycle parking or onboard bicycle storage is made available to riders. Bikes are also the only viable form of transportation for many early morning or night shift workers when buses and trains aren't operating. According to SRPEDD's 2023 Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP), which focuses on the public transit needs of seniors, persons with a disability, and low-income individuals in Southeastern Massachusetts, "the need for evening and weekend [public transit service] has been repeatedly expressed by communities and individuals throughout the region and is considered to be a top priority transit need." Where bus service may fall short due to a variety of factors including underfunding, bicycles can and do fill a critical gap for many would-be riders.

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1 https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/At-the-Intersection-of-Active-Transportation-and-Equity.pdf

2 https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/At-the-Intersection-of-Active-Transportation-and-Equity.pdf

3 https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40

Household Spending on Vehicles

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey provides data on expenditures, income, and demographic characteristics of consumers across the United States. The survey found that households in the United States spent an average of $10,961 on transportation in 2021—the second largest household expenditure category after housing when spending on behalf of households, such as healthcare benefits, is excluded.4 Households in the lowest income quintile spent the least on transportation ($4,273 vs. $19,204 by households in the highest income quintile) but faced a larger transportation cost burden, spending 26.9% of their after-tax income on transportation compared to 10.4 percent by the highest income quintile in 2021. Consumer Expenditure Survey data from 2001 to 2021 further shows that total average U.S. household spending on transportation increased 43% over that 20-year time frame.

These continual cost increases for vehicle ownership are a significant financial challenge, especially for SMMPO residents already struggling to keep up with rising housing costs. For individuals and families with limited access to nearby transit routes, or careers outside of transit service areas, vehicle ownership is the only viable and safe option to get around. For households where new safe cycling infrastructure can enable a broad range of trips to work, school, shopping, and recreation, bikes can contribute towards greater financial stability, savings, and wealth-building if cycling infrastructure allows them to reduce the number of vehicles they own. According to the 2021 American Community Survey, 56% of the region's 237,217 occupied housing units have access to, or own two or more vehicles. A reduction in this amount could equate to millions of dollars in household savings across the region. Populations who have historically experienced the most limited mobility options have been low-income households, older adults, people of color, people with a disability, people with limited English proficiency, youth, and others without access to a motor vehicle. National data shows fatality rates are 23-30% higher for Hispanic and Black bicyclists than white bicyclists.5 Many neighborhoods considered to be "Environmental Justice" populations do not have safe and comfortable bikeways or have bikeways in poor condition. These populations have historically been largely absent or underrepresented in transportation planning discussions and this has contributed to unsafe conditions where they are overrepresented in crashes involving a bicycle.

4 https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Transportation-Economic-Trends-Transportation-Spen/ida7-k95k/

5 https://massdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c80930586c474a3486d391a850007694

Image: The Fairhaven Bike Bus on the way to school, source: https://southcoastbikeway.com/our-towns/fairhaven/

Existing Conditions and Needs

In Massachusetts 9.1% of the working age population and 11% of the overall population live with a disability.6 Outreach participants with disabilities in MassDOT's 2019 Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan reported that bicycling provides them independence and control, physical activity, therapy, and excitement. The plan also found that individuals who had a personal history of traumatic events that led to their disability enjoy these many benefits of cycling but are unwilling to share roadways with motor vehicles to reduce risk of further injury and trauma. Bikeways and other separated and protected facilities have been useful for people who rely on wheelchairs and other mobility devices to get around and meet basic needs; the existence, quality and connectivity of these facilities shapes the quality and practicality of their commute.

6 https://massdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c80930586c474a3486d391a850007694

While driving a motor vehicle is the primary means of transportation for many residents in the SMMPO region, specific populations rely heavily on bicycling and other modes to get around. According to 2017-2021 5-year ACS estimates, 9.35% of households in the SMMPO region do not have access to a personal vehicle. This number is lower than the state's average of households without a vehicle, which is 12% according to 2020 ACS estimates. During this plan's public engagement process, SMMPO/SRPEDD staff heard from several community members about how bicycling allows and does not allow them to meet various basic needs. Without access to a car and bus service that aligns with their work schedule, immigrant workers in New Bedford's fish houses bicycle to work early in the morning, even on the coldest day of the year. In the absence of school bus service within the 2-mile radius of Taunton High School, GATRA buses become overcrowded, and youth bicycle to school on incomplete roadways that lack adequate protection for cyclists. Community members voiced their concerns about young adult family members

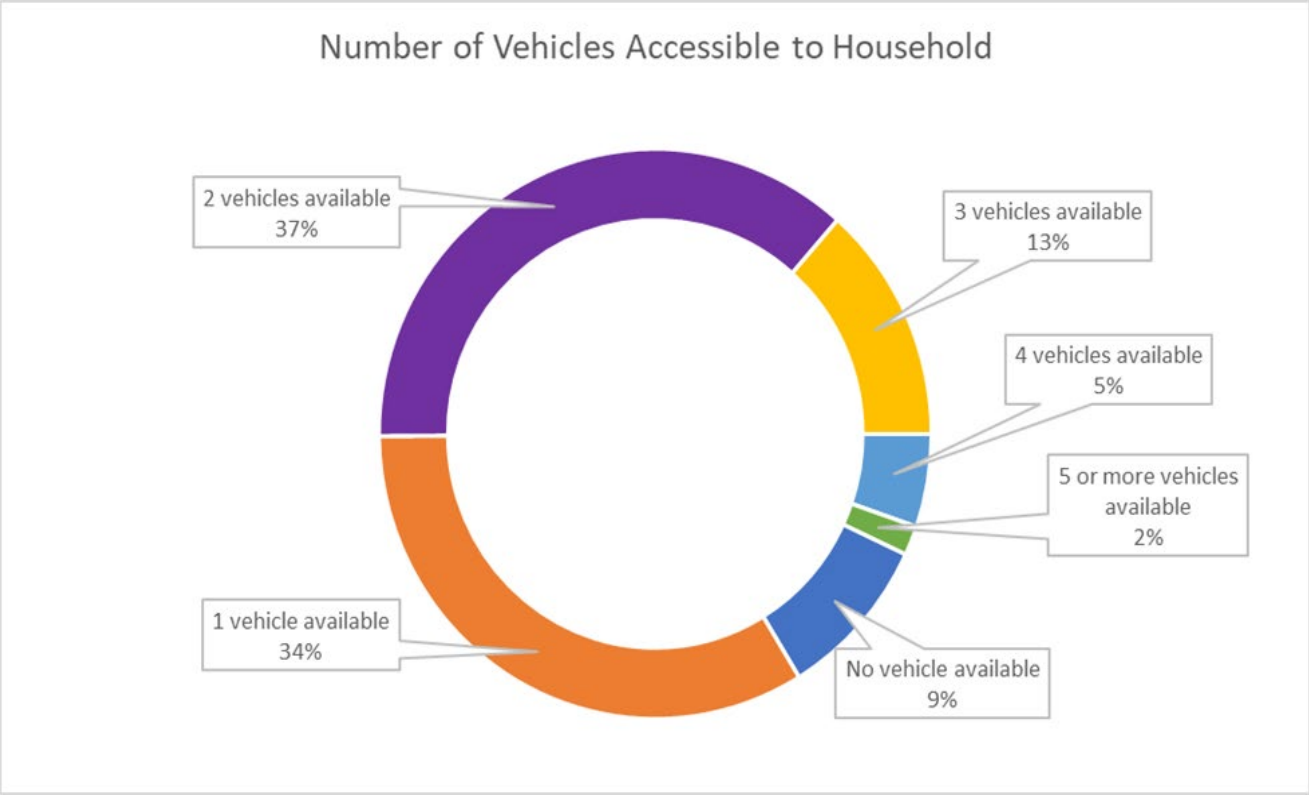


Image: Number of Vehicles Accessible to Household, 2017-2021, SMMPO Region, source: U.S. Census Bureau

without access to a vehicle who were unable to pursue a community college degree in the SMMPO region due to infrequent and limited bus service, and distances too long to safely bicycle. Insufficient connectivity and safety prevent some from bicycling between cities and towns, but some individuals still bicycle on incomplete and unsafe roadways due to having no viable alternative transportation options.

Bicycle-related crashes in the SMMPO region disproportionately occur in municipalities with higher concentrations of low-income and minority populations. From 2010 to 2020, the municipalities of New Bedford (328), Fall River (249), Attleboro (83), Taunton (76), and Fairhaven (50) accounted for the most cyclist-involved crashes. SRPEDD's recent award of a Safe Streets for All grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation will allow the agency to develop safety action plans to identify eligible projects for roadway safety improvements across the region. It will be important for vulnerable populations who are overrepresented in these bicycle-related crash numbers and organizations who serve them to partner with SRPEDD during this process to ensure their experiences are understood and considered in the design and prioritization of future roadway improvement projects.

Centering the needs of historically underserved and transportation-disadvantaged communities is a growing goal of SRPEDD's bicycle planning efforts. Equity was one of the criteria used to score and evaluate routing options in SRPEDD's recent feasibility study for the South Coast Bikeway. Access to and from neighborhoods with low-income, minority, and limited English proficient populations was evaluated to determine the relative equity of different route options. This included access to and from neighborhoods with historically underserved populations, access to and from neighborhoods with high population densities, access to food, and access to other modes of transportation.

Based on the feasibility study, the South Coast Bikeway Alliance initially decided to pursue the Northern Scenic Route as their primary routing, but decided to keep a hybrid routing of the central and southern options from the study as part of their official routing as the feasibility study showed that this route would allow more vulnerable populations to access the bicycle network and priority destinations such as employment, food, and educational (such as UMass Dartmouth) amenities.

As SMMPO region municipalities continue expanding bicycle infrastructure using additional but still limited sources of funding, it is important to prioritize connections that would enhance bikeability for underserved and vulnerable populations who most rely on this mode, would most benefit from alternative transportation options, and are most represented in bicycle crashes. Connections to neighborhoods, employment centers, healthcare centers, grocery stores, schools, and recreational activities are critical.

Image: Bike lanes on Hawthorn Street in New Bedford

Transportation planning stakeholders must also prioritize increased bicycle infrastructure on roadways that connect to transit stations and stops, as this increases access and safety for transit riders to make the last mile of their commutes. In areas outside of downtown cores where homes and amenities are widely spread out, transit routes in the SMMPO region are not robust enough to connect people to many places they need to go. Expanding bicycling infrastructure in coordination with transit routes is an essential component to filling these gaps and safely and efficiently connecting transit riders to routes and destinations. This can increase access to jobs in suburban regions, such as industrial parks, for low- and moderate-income households and those without access to a vehicle and increases opportunity for social and economic mobility. Bicycle infrastructure is also a crucial component of mixed-use and transit-oriented districts (TOD), where many of these amenities are located within biking and walking distance of each other, and the need for a motor-vehicle is reduced.

As SRPEDD municipalities begin to re-zone for multifamily housing districts required by the MBTA Communities law and adopt more TOD and smart growth zoning overlay districts that expand bikeability, planning for alternative transportation options should be accompanied by planning for inclusive housing. As bicycle and multimodal transportation options increase the desirability of certain neighborhoods this will continue to increase home values and disproportionately impact low- and moderate-income communities, particularly at a time when housing costs across the state continue to climb out of reach. Building infrastructure for viable, affordable alternative transportation options like bicycling can offset basic living costs and increase access for more households of various incomes to live and work in the SMMPO region. However, increased housing costs can easily negate this benefit for populations who most need it. Local, regional, and state stakeholders involved in transportation, housing, and community development planning must anticipate and mitigate unintended consequences of improved transportation amenities in communities, particularly those that affect property values and housing affordability, to ensure that benefits and burdens are equally distributed, and all residents can access these amenities.

Environment

As of 2019, the transportation sector accounted for 42% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Massachusetts.7 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, transportation-related emissions declined significantly before ramping back up throughout pandemic recovery. During the temporary decline in motor vehicle traffic and increased sales of bicycles and e-bikes throughout the pandemic, some cities and towns across Massachusetts seized the opportunity to improve bicycle accommodations.8

In addition to being one of the most cost-effective and equitable forms of transportation, bicycling is also one of the most sustainable and healthy modes. It yields negligible emissions, negligible operating costs, and extensive health benefits. No fossil fuels are burned directly by bicycling either, with their only emissions resulting from the production of food consumed by the user and the emissions from originally manufacturing the bike. According to the Federal Transit Administration, when emissions are expressed as pounds of CO2 per passenger mile, single occupancy vehicles produce .96 lbs./mile, while buses produce .64lbs/mile.9 Considering the carbon emissions from food and manufacturing, the League of American Bicyclists reports that bikes only emit 0.07 pounds/mile, or about 7% of the CO2 emissions per mile of a single occupancy vehicle.10

7 Commonwealth of Massachusetts. “Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030 | Mass.gov.” www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2025-and-2030

8 Commonwealth of Massachusetts. “Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030 | Mass.gov.” www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2025-and-2030

9 U.S. Department of Transportation. Public Transportation’s Role in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (January 2010),www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/PublicTransportationsRoleInRespondingToClimateChange2010.pdf

10 Foersterling, Jack. “Tackling Climate Change One Ride at a Time.” PeopleForBikes, 21 Sept. 2021, www.peopleforbikes.org/news/tackling-climate-change-one-ride-at-a-time

Connecting Bikes to Transit

While bicycle transportation is an efficient and healthy mode of transportation on its own merits, it is also a very important connection mode for public transit services. The region is served by two regional transit authorities, the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Authority (GATRA) and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), which provide fixed route bus service as well as paratransit and on-demand transit services. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provides passenger train service to Boston via the Providence/Stoughton and Middleborough/Lakeville commuter rail lines. Improved bicycle access to bus stops, commuter rail stations, and other forms of transit services will increase the reach and effectiveness of transit while reducing parking demand, congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions.

After several decades of planning, the MBTA's South Coast Rail project will soon be operational and will utilize the already existing Middleborough/Lakeville Line to connect the cities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton to South Station in Boston by passenger train service for the first time since September 1958. Passenger train service is planned to be operational by the beginning of 2024, increasing the total number of MBTA train stations in regular daily commuter rail service in the region from three to eight stations. In addition to those eight stations served daily, the MBTA has fully redesigned and initiated plans to rebuild the temporarily closed South Attleboro MBTA station to restore it to regular daily service. Once South Coast Rail is operational, the MBTA plans to continue to utilize the Middleborough/Lakeville and Wareham Village stations for Cape FLYER service on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year. In total, the region has eleven MBTA stations including those currently operational, under construction, temporarily closed, and seasonally used.

Allowing bicycles on board transit buses and trains provides riders the most flexibility to use their bike at both the beginning and end of their transit ride and provides the most benefit to cyclists using transit, however there are limitations to when and how bikes can be brought on these regional transit services. GATRA and SRTA have bicycle racks mounted on the front of all their buses, and these racks generally accommodate a total of two standard bicycles per bus. These bus-mounted bike racks will not accommodate bikes with non-standard tire widths, which is more common on e-bikes. The MBTA allows bikes to be brought on board the commuter rail Monday through Friday,

Image: a GATRA Route 8 electric bus in Taunton with bicycle mounted at the front

except during peak hours in the morning and evening, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Collapsible or foldable bicycles are allowed at all times on MBTA Commuter Rail trains, and CapeFLYER service, which links South Station in Boston to Hyannis, allows bicycles on board for no additional charge on all trains.

Where bikes can't be brought on board transit vehicles, bike parking allows cyclists to securely lock their bike before boarding transit. Many of the region's existing transit stations are woefully inadequate to handle increased on-site bicycle parking demand, as several bikes have been observed attached to fences, signposts, and other structures due to the lack of nearby bike parking availability. Many existing bicycle racks in the region also have outdated designs which makes properly locking bicycles or e-bikes from their frame to the rack difficult and puts these bikes at greater risk of theft. The MBTA website shows the type of bicycle parking at each commuter rail station but does not specify where the racks are located at the station. The GATRA and SRTA websites do not have information on bicycle parking at their bus stations. Access to this type of information would be beneficial for bicycle trip planning and could increase the use of these facilities.

Overall, all transit stations should be considered priority areas for bicycle access improvements, and more data is needed on the availability of bicycle parking in relation to fixed route bus stops in the region. Bikes provide additional flexibility for transit users, so that the fixed routes provided by transit agencies don't become too great of a barrier to ridership for individuals located a long walk from the nearest transit route or station. In November 2022, SRTA created a set of Bus Stop Design Guidelines which recommended the addition of bike racks near bus stops, and which also considered the planning and design of infrastructure that will safely accommodate both buses and bikes. This need for safety considerations is brought into focus by the continued installation of bike lanes along the side of roadways, where buses pull over to allow riders to get aboard, creating a conflict zone. The implementation of floating bus stops, where bike lanes are routed behind a bus stop instead of in front of it, can help to reduce points of conflict between bikes and buses. Floating bus stops are particularly useful on roads with fixed route bus stops and high volumes of people cycling, or roads with protected bike lanes.

Not all trips can be taken by bicycle simply due to time constraints or long distances to be covered by a trip. Because of the limitations of bicycle travel, it is vital to provide proper bicycle parking facilities at new and existing transit stops to ensure cyclists have a means to utilize transit services while ensuring their bicycle will be there when they return or can be loaded easily onto a transit vehicle for riding to their destination.

Transit planning efforts related to bike infrastructure should also take into account new and emerging types of bikes and mobility devices. E-bikes, which continue to gain popularity, are useful for helping extend the feasibly trip travel distance for a wider range of users. Cargo bikes, which have large storage spaces onboard, are valuable for families with small children, as well as individuals needing to carry assorted goods, such as groceries, on their bike trips. Recumbent bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, baby strollers, skateboards, and other micro mobility devices are also important to plan accommodations for. In some locations in the Boston area, the MBTA has begun to implement flexible storage lockers at train stations that can accommodate a wider range of bicycles and other micromobility devices. These types of improvements can help make the transit network more inclusive of all ages, abilities, and passenger needs.

In addition to the provision of bike and micromobility storage options, the creation of high-comfort bikeways to transit locations will assist in shifting potential riders from single occupancy vehicles to cycling as more options become available. While the MBTA has made many new and existing train stations more accessible to bikes over the past several years, there is more planning and investment needed. Safe cycling and walking infrastructure leading to transit locations and convenient access to

storage at MBTA stations, bus terminals, and bus stops will improve connectivity between the regional transit and active transportation networks, increase transit ridership, reduce roadway congestion, and help to reduce vehicular greenhouse gas emissions.

Reduced Emissions through Compact Land Use

A growing body of work has built upon the connection between land use/development patterns and transportation. An essential part of this connection is the reduction of vehicle miles travelled (VMT) to produce shorter trips for road users, encourage other modes of transportation, and improve air quality. Shorter vehicle trips resulting from compact, live-work land use patterns could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that doubling of residential density can typically lower VMT by 5-12%.11 The reduction of VMT means shorter trips in both distance and time as destinations are closer together and therefore take less time to travel to. All of this results in lower costs for households near areas that provide a variety of transportation options and destinations. Additionally, the MassTrails Program's Shared Use Path Impact Study of four Massachusetts shared-use paths found that the reduction in motor vehicle trips led to $2.2 million in savings from reductions in the social costs of greenhouse gas and other emissions during the four-month study period.12

As of the 2020 American Community Survey, only 0.1% of residents of the SMMPO region biked to work. While this percentage is low compared to more dense urban areas, prioritizing compact development close to destinations such as employment centers or recreational opportunities while also providing bicycle accommodations can work to shift the number of commuters away from their own vehicles to bicycles.

11 Megill Legendre, Shawn S., Jeffrey Perlman, and Jennifer S. Gonzalez. "Sustainability Tools in Action: Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled Through Coordinated Transportation and Land Use Planning Across Levels of Government." Transportation Research Record 2453, no. 1 (January 2014): 30–36.

12 Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Benefits of Shared Use Paths | Mass.gov." www.mass.gov/guides/benefits-of-shared-use-paths

Air & Water Quality Benefits

Operation of typical internal combustion engine (ICE) motor vehicles creates emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2), carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), and nitrous oxide (NOx). Each of the compounds measured in these analyses have different contributions to continued climate change.

- Carbon Dioxide (CO2): Naturally occurring in low levels, emitted by respiration, decomposition of organic matter, and burning of fossil fuels, high levels of CO2 trap heat energy in atmosphere resulting in global warming
- Carbon Monoxide (CO): Human produced chemical compound, emitted by incomplete combustion of organic matter, can cause serious health problems and death, contributes to the formation of ground level ozone
- Nitrous Oxide (NOx): Emitted by burning of gasoline and diesel fuels, reacts with VOC, heat, and sunlight to form ground level ozone which can impact human health, vegetation, and even entire ecosystems
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC): Typically, human made chemicals found in household items like paint thinners and cleaning products, also found in many vehicle fuels, contribute to ground level ozone and even water contamination.

While it is important to reduce the emissions of each of these compounds for environmental purposes, there are a number of adverse health impacts that can be exacerbated by the presence of high levels of these compounds.

Public Health

A growing body of literature connects active modes of transportation such as walking and biking to better health outcomes. A 2010 study of 14 countries, all 50 US states, and 47 of the 50 largest cities found that there was a negative correlation between active travel (walking and biking) and self-reported obesity at all three levels. It also found a negative correlation between active travel and diabetes at the city and state levels.13 In order to accomplish these types of outcomes, it is crucial to plan for future infrastructure that supports walking and biking.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, incorporating bicycle and pedestrian (active transportation and recreation) infrastructure and facilities promotes physical activity. Strong evidence shows that this activity can lower the risk of early death, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. Physical activity also can help prevent weight gain, reduce depression, as well as improve cognitive functioning in older adults.14

The benefits of active transportation do not end with personal health benefits but have a significant impact on broader community health outcomes. The benefits of improved air quality that may result from increased active transportation and reduced motor vehicle emissions are especially apparent for children, older adults, and people with respiratory diseases.15 To move toward a future with better health outcomes for communities, incorporation of active transportation facilities and infrastructure will be vital. While it is not a singular solution for all public health issues in the SMMPO region, it is an integral piece of long-term success for healthy communities.

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute provides county-wide data for counties present in the SMMPO region including Bristol, Plymouth, and Norfolk County.16 While the region does not include any single county in its entirety, these statistics provide insight into health indicators that can be improved with increased investment in bicycle infrastructure and providing more opportunities for physical activity.

County	Percent of adults with obesity	Percent of physical inactivity	Percent with access to exercise opportunities
Bristol	32%	31%	87%
Plymouth	27%	25%	80%
Norfolk	22%	26%	88%

13 Pucher, John, et al. “Walking and Cycling to Health: A Comparative Analysis of City, State, and International Data.” American Journal of Public Health, vol. 100, no. 10, Oct. 2010, pp. 1986–92, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2937005/

14 Hill, James O. “Dietary and Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.” Obesity Management, vol. 4, no. 6, Dec. 2008, pp. 317–18, www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/default.aspx

15 US Federal Highway Administration. “FAQ - Health in Transportation - Planning - FHWA.” www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health_in_transportation/faq/

16 https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/

Bicycle Safety

While cycling may be a part of improving overall public health, motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death in the United States. According to the MassDOT Impact Portal, which tabulates crash data across the Commonwealth, there were 432 fatalities statewide in 2022 alone. Of these fatalities, 10 were cyclists. While this may seem like an insignificant proportion, cyclists and pedestrians are especially vulnerable to motor vehicle crashes. Without adequate facilities for cyclists, they are put at risk of crashes with motor vehicles. The higher the speed on the roadway, the more likely cyclists and other vulnerable road users are to be seriously injured or killed.

To assess the safety of cyclists in the SMMPO region, data was extracted from the MassDOT Impact Portal for the years 2010-2020. All the following statistics refer to data extracted for the 2010-2020 period in the region:

- There were 1,151 crashes involving cyclists in the 10-year period
- 9 fatal injuries occurred as the result of motor vehicle crashes
- 74.7% (860) of crashes involving a cyclist involved non-fatal injuries
- 81.5% (938) of crashes involving a cyclist occurred in daylight
- Months where the most crashes occurred were those typically considered summer or early fall (May-October)
- July accounted for the most crashes with 166 total over the 10-year period
- New Bedford (328), Fall River (249), Attleboro (83), Taunton (76), and Fairhaven (50) accounted for the most cyclist-involved crashes over the 10-year period

One of the most concerning outcomes when analyzing crash statistics for the SMMPO region was the age of cyclists involved in crashes. Over the 10-year period, cyclists aged 6-15 (276 crashes) and 16-20 (163 crashes) represented the largest age groups involved in crashes, accounting for 439 or 38% of total bicycle-involved crashes over the 10-year period. There may be several contributing factors to an outsized portion of these crashes such as limited transportation mode choice in the age group, lack of education on bicycle roadway safety, and lack of safe and physically separated bicycle infrastructure. However, this highlights the critical need for improved facilities and public education across age groups. This data also highlights the importance of engaging with MassDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program, which among other things, offers educational tools to students, parents/guardians, and educators on safe walking and biking through a combination of on-site training sessions, school assemblies, workshops, videos, lesson plans, and printed materials.

Cycling may dramatically improve long-term health outcomes, but without adequate safety infrastructure, cyclists' immediate health and wellbeing in the region are still at risk. Building this infrastructure can be accomplished with ongoing planning and improvements to the transportation network outlined in this plan, including the creation and expansion of safe, interconnected, and high-comfort bikeways across the region. The biggest factor affecting roadway safety for bicyclists is often the speed of motor vehicle traffic. Traffic calming is a street design tool used to help address unsafe vehicle speeds by utilizing a combination of measures to reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use and alter driver behaviors. Traffic calming measures can be implemented

at a single intersection, roadway segment, or at the neighborhood scale to address speeding issues. Commonly used traffic calming measures include speed humps, curb extensions, lane narrowing or removal, raising crosswalks or entire intersections, installing protected bike lanes with flexible delineator posts or other physical barriers, or the installation of speed feedback signs or rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs). Each roadway segment or intersection has its own unique context and certain methods will work better than others depending on vehicle speed and volume, land use, bicycle and pedestrian conflict areas, as well as municipal public works considerations like stormwater drainage and snow plowing. A variety of resources, regulations, programs, as well as a technical toolkit are available on the MassDOT Safe Speeds webpage. Additionally, small scale demonstration projects can be a cost-effective way to test the effectiveness of a traffic calming improvement before deploying more expensive permanent solutions.

Bicycle Level of Comfort

To assess the condition of roadways for use by cyclists in the SMMPO region, a table of bicycle travel stress was developed using methodology similar to that used by other MPOs and cities. Lane numbers and Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) values were provided by the existing MassDOT roadway inventory and may need to be updated to accurately evaluate the level of stress on individual roadways. Rankings rely on data provided by the MassDOT road inventory for roadway classifications, volumes, lane numbers, and other factors. This analysis takes a broad view of the region. In this ranking system, a score of 1 represents the least stressful roads for bicyclists, whereas a score of 4 represents the most stressful roads.

Number of Lanes	Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	Mixed Traffic		Street with Bike Lane		
		≤30 mph	≤35 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph
2-3 Lanes	≤1500	1.5	2.5	1	2	2.5
	≤3000	2	3	1.5	2.5	3
	≤6000	3	3.5	2	3	3.5
	6000+	3.5	4	2.5	3.5	4
4 Lanes	≤1500	2.5	3.5	1.5	2.5	3
	≤3000	3	4	2	3	3.5
	≤6000	3.5	4	2.5	3.5	4
	6000+	4	4	3	4	4
6+ Lanes	All Volumes	4	4	4	4	4

As seen in the table above, the lower the “stress level” the more likely the roadway is to be accessible for more non-motor vehicle users. This does not necessarily mean that there will be no stress associated with cycling on a roadway but that it should generally be lower. The image below is a map of the projected bicycle stress level of all the roadways in the SMMPO region. This map excludes interstate highways, since bicycle travel on these roadways is not permitted.

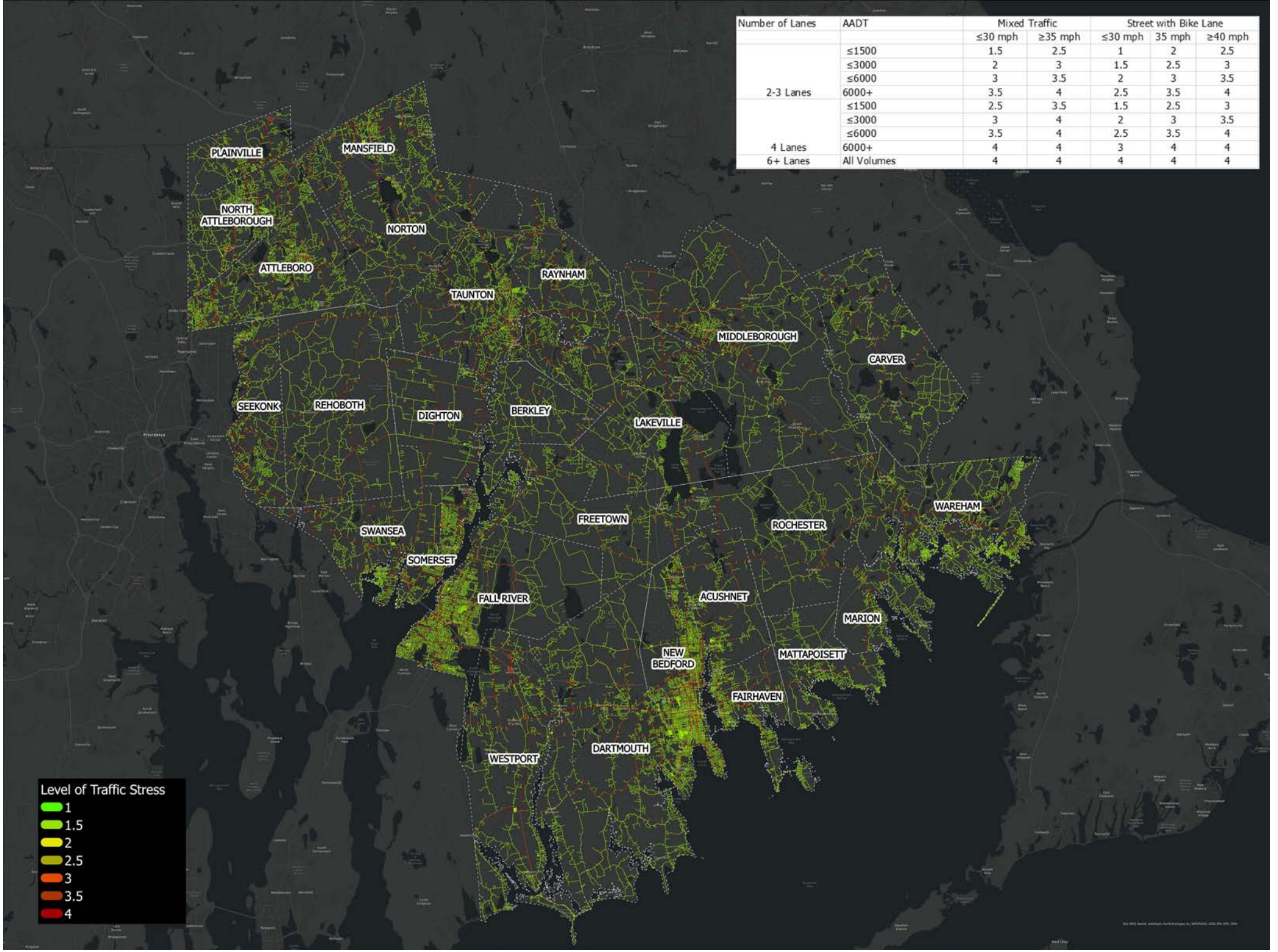

Number of Lanes | AADT | Mixed Traffic | | Street with Bike Lane | | |
		≤30 mph	≥35 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph
2-3 Lanes	≤1500	1.5	2.5	1	2	2.5
	≤3000	2	3	1.5	2.5	3
	≤6000	3	3.5	2	3	3.5
	6000+	3.5	4	2.5	3.5	4
4 Lanes	≤1500	2.5	3.5	1.5	2.5	3
	≤3000	3	4	2	3	3.5
	≤6000	3.5	4	2.5	3.5	4
	6000+	4	4	3	4	4
6+ Lanes	All Volumes	4	4	4	4	4
PLAINVILLE
MANSFIELD
NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH
NORTON
ATTLEBORO
RAYNHAM
TAUNTON
MIDDLEBOROUGH
CARVER
SEEKONK
REHOBOTH
DIGHTON
BERKLEY
LAKEVILLE
WAREHAM
FREETOWN
ROCHESTER
SWANSEA
SOMERSET
FALL RIVER
ACUSHNET
MARION
NEW BEDFORD
MATTAPOISETT
FAIRHAVEN
DARTMOUTH
WESTPORT
Level of Traffic Stress
1
1.5
2
2.5
3
3.5
4

Image: SMMPO region roadways, classified by projected bicyclist stress levels with green as lowest projected stress and red as highest projected stress

Economy and Connectivity

SRPEDD is the region's federally designated Economic Development District, and SRPEDD staff help to deliver millions of dollars of public and private investments as well as job creation to cities and towns throughout the region. SRPEDD staff work to facilitate public-private partnerships that benefit communities, workers, businesses, and the whole of Southeastern Massachusetts. SRPEDD staff, with guidance from the Regional Economic Strategy Committee (RESC), create and update the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), to reflect the most up to date economic development initiatives and plans for the region. The CEDS identifies the region's diverse active and passive recreational opportunities, such as the emerging South Coast Bikeway, as economic strengths. Alternatively, a notable weakness of the region is the investment still needed to update existing transportation infrastructure and build new modern multi-modal facilities.

While bikes are humble vehicles, they can be an economic force for good. A local example of this is the Pan-Mass Challenge, an annual bike-a-thon that raises more money for charity than any other single athletic fundraising event in the world, with 100% of every rider-raised dollar going to cancer research and patient care at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. In 2022, the 43rd Annual Pan-Mass Challenge featured more than 6,400 participants, 280,000 donors, and raised $69 million, creating the single largest donation in the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's history. The PMC includes 16 one and two-day bike routes across southeastern Massachusetts, ranging from 25 to 211 miles, catering to multiple levels of cyclist ability. The PMC's routes through the SMMPO region include the communities of Plainville, North Attleborough, Attleboro, Mansfield, Norton, Rehoboth, Dighton, Taunton, Berkley, Freetown, Lakeville, Rochester, and Wareham. Since its founding in 1980, the PMC has raised $957 million for cancer research and patient care. In part due to the PMC's fundraising, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute has played a critical role in the development of more than half of all cancer drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the past 5 years.17 In 2024, the PMC will aim to cross the $1 billion raised milestone.

17 The Jimmy Fund Celebrates 75 Years of Progress and Impact on May 22. Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 22 May 2023, www.dana-farber.org/newsroom/news-releases/2023/the-jimmy-fund-celebrates-75-years-of-progress-and-impact-on-may-22/#:~:text=Dana%2DFarber%20investigators%20played%20a.

Photo caption: In August 2023, WBZ-TV's Lisa Hughes was joined by fellow riders at the Apponequet Regional High School water station along the PMC route towards Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Bourne. Courtesy: Pan-Mass Challenge

Economic Benefits of Shared Use Paths

Growing the network of shared use paths is an important component to increasing economic development in the SMMPO region. Shared use paths can contribute significant economic benefits to their communities by providing access to businesses within walking and biking distance of the path. In 2021, the MassTrails Program released its Shared Use Paths Impact Study, which examined the economic, health, transportation, environmental, safety, and accessibility impacts of four shared use paths in Massachusetts including the Cape Cod Rail Trail, Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) - Norwottuck, and Northern Strand Community Trail. The study found that 42% of path users spend money while using the path, with the average path user spending $4 – 9 on weekdays and $6 – 13 on weekends. From July-October 2019, the 26-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail alone supported 99 jobs and generated $9.2 million in economic activity and $1.5 million in tax revenue. This economic impact resulted from 109,747 bicycle trips and 14,271 pedestrian trips on the Cape Cod Rail Trail during the 4-month study period alone. This study's impressive economic data shows that Massachusetts shared use paths attract tourism, create local jobs, and meaningfully contribute to their local economies.

Connectivity through Complete Streets

Connectivity is a measure of how well bikeways are linked together to form a convenient and attractive network that facilitates biking for everyday trip purposes. In general, this means that high-comfort bikeways follow the most direct path between origin and destination points, which may include homes, places of work, schools, shopping centers, as well as recreational facilities.

To enable connectivity between high-comfort bikeways, the increased importance of complete streets principals is essential. Complete Streets are streets that prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for people who use the street network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, micro-mobility users, freight delivery services, and motorists. The goal is to provide an equitable and safe transportation network for travelers of all ages and abilities, including those from marginalized communities that have experienced historic disinvestment. This vision is not achieved through a one-size-fits-all solution – each complete street is unique and must be developed to best serve its community context and its primary role in the network. More details on MassDOT's Complete Streets Program, which is a funding program for local communities, is included in this plan's section on Bike Policy & Programs.

Bikeway Benefits for Businesses & Local Governments

Bikes can be a regional economic engine that support increased levels of tourism and clientele at local businesses such as food establishments. The SMMPO region's coastline, lakes and ponds, along with expansive forests, state parks, and historic villages provide a wide array of recreational and tourism activities throughout the year. With continued bikeway planning linking the SMMPO region to the rest of the state, the cities and towns across the region have an opportunity to establish new and continue expanding upon existing tourism opportunities.

The installation of bike lanes or separated paths on major travel thoroughfares often garners intense backlash, especially from local businesses along commercial corridors that have concerns about reduced parking and potential loss of business revenue because of the installation of new bike infrastructure with narrower travel lanes and removing parking. The National Street Improvements Study conducted by Portland State University found that bicycle lanes and infrastructure can produce tangible economic benefits for commercial corridors, particularly the food service industry.[18] The research was conducted to evaluate the

18 https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1214&context=trec_reports

Image: The Wareham Village business district, along the South Coast Bikeway Route

economic effects of bicycle infrastructure along 14 roadway corridors across six cities — San Francisco, Portland, Memphis, Seattle, Indianapolis, and Minneapolis.

When compared to roadways without bikeway improvements, the study found that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements had positive impacts on the local economy as measured through sales and employment. For example, in 2012, a roadway corridor in Minneapolis had its travel lane widths reduced and on-street parking was removed to make room for a new bike lane. Over the study period, retail employment increased by 12.64%, compared to an 8.54% increase for a nearby control corridor without bikeway improvements. The bike lane corridor also recorded a 52.44% increase in food sales, more than doubled the 22.46% increase of the control corridor. This dramatic increase in food sales was replicated in other cities included in the study. For example, in 2014 a protected bike lane addition along a major roadway in Seattle coincided with an increase in food service employment by 30.78%, compared to 2.49% and 16.17% increases for control corridors.

In terms of land use, bicycles require less space than automobiles. Ten to twenty bicycles can fit in the parking space of a single car.[19] Bicycling and decreased dependency on cars can equate to less maintenance and development costs. More land available for development, with less parking, leads to higher property tax revenue per acre for local governments. The increased viability of bicycling with the advent of ebikes has the potential to facilitate the development of much needed financially attainable multifamily housing units in the SMMPO region and generate savings and reduced land expenditures for developers and businesses – but those benefits will only be realized if local governments reduce parking requirements, allow for greater housing densities, and built out networks of high-comfort bikeways and the infrastructure and policies to support them.

19 https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/at-the-intersection-of-active-transportation-and-equity.pdf

Regional Bike Networks

The overall vision for a regional bike network in Southeastern Massachusetts is an important component of regional transportation planning. Roadway improvement projects are typically completed in many different phases over the course of many years, and across multiple municipalities all operating under different budget constraints, local priorities, and timelines. Completed segments of on-road bikeways may often appear to members of the public as disjointed and disconnected from important trip origins and destinations, however, upon closer examination of the planned regional interconnected network, a clearer vision of the future regional bicycle network comes into focus. With a long-term vision for the desired outcome of an interconnected bike network within the region in place, local communities in the SMMPO region can utilize the Regional Bicycle Plan to justify bicycle improvements, plan individual segments as needed to coincide with their planned roadway upgrades, compete for fiscally constrained bikeway funding programs, and rely on the long-term network plan as the backbone for ensuring connectivity into the future.

Connectivity is essential between communities large and small, rural and urban, providing safe travel to work, home, and recreation. Shared use paths are the most critical component to regional bike networks because they facilitate travel for all ages and abilities, and they are the preferred design option anytime right-of-way widths, funding, and other constraints allow for them. However, where the ideal conditions cannot be met for a shared use path, buffered and protected bike lanes on high stress roadways and sharrows on low stress roadways can provide important linkages between shared use paths and many bicycle trip generators such as parks, schools, downtowns, and other workplaces.

The vision for the Southeastern Massachusetts bike network is made up of many smaller completed and planned bike paths, bike lanes, and low stress roadways which together stitch together a functional and cohesive planned bikeway that will facilitate safe and interconnected bike travel across Southeastern Massachusetts, and to adjacent regions, once fully realized.

Listed on the following pages are several regional bike networks that local municipalities, SRPEDD/SMMPO, and regional partner organizations continue to advance. Together, these bikeways make up a regionally connected, high comfort bikeway vision that will help to enable increases in bike ridership across Southeastern Massachusetts and serve as a backbone for additional local bikeways.

South Coast Bikeway

The South Coast Bikeway (SCB), once realized, will be a 50-mile continuous system of shared use paths and protected bicycle lanes that will connect to existing bike paths in Rhode Island and Cape Cod, namely the East Bay Bike Path in Warren, RI and the Cape Cod Canal Bikeway. Cities and towns along the SCB include Swansea, Somerset, Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven, Mattapoisett, Marion, and Wareham. Several segments of the bikeway already exist in Swansea, Somerset, Fall River, New Bedford, Fairhaven, Mattapoisett, and Wareham. The SCB's linkage at the Cape Cod Canal will also connect to "Vision 88" a planned network visioned by the Cape Cod Commission which would include 88 miles of shared use paths throughout Cape Cod starting at the Cape Cod Canal and connecting south to Woods Hole in Falmouth and east to Provincetown.

The SCB route is also a component of the East Coast Greenway, a nationally recognized route along the entire east coast of the United States from Key West, Florida to the Unites States-Canada border in Maine. The SCB is supported by the South Coast Bikeway Alliance (SCBA), which is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization made up of community representatives and groups that work with local leaders and organizations to advocate for and build bikeway networks throughout the South Coast region. Their overall goal is to promote active transportation and recreation, while bringing the South Coast Bikeway to fruition. More information on the South Coast Bikeway and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance can be found at the project's website. The East Coast Greenway Alliance is also an active partner in moving the bikeway forward.

In 2020, SRPEDD completed a Route 6 Corridor Study in Marion, Wareham, Mattapoisett, and Fairhaven. The following year, MassDOT initiated four roadway improvement projects along Route 6 in Marion and Wareham that included proposals to reduce the number of motor vehicle travel lanes and create a significant distance of new shared use paths along the side of Route 6. These MassDOT projects presented a unique opportunity to close the gap between the two communities and re-route the South Coast Bikeway in a way that would provide more access for low-income neighborhoods while also providing economic development and tourism benefits for businesses along the Route 6 corridor. The SCB's previous route through County Road and Fearing Hill Road would have provided fewer economic development benefits and was complicated by those roads' rural nature and narrow rights-of-way widths.

In 2022, the South Coast Bikeway Alliance voted to approve these route changes to add MassDOT's Route 6 upgrades as their newly refined route through Wareham and Marion. To further enhance this region of the SCB, the Marion Pathway Phase 1 Rail Trail, and the Wareham Minot Avenue/Narrows Road Shared Use Path projects are both funded by the SMMPO's TIP for fiscal years 2027 and 2028 respectively. Those two projects will add several additional miles of shared use paths in the area and will complement the recently completed Shining Tides Mile in Mattapoisett, as well as Phase 2A rail trail expansion in Mattapoisett north of Route 6 and the existing Phoenix Rail Trail in Fairhaven. A future fully completed South Coast Bikeway from New Bedford to Wareham is within reach once these projects are completed.

The SCB's route through New Bedford, Dartmouth, Westport, and linking into the Quequechan River Rail Trail in Fall River has long been considered a gap in the bikeway, with various routing alternatives available. In 2020 and 2021, SRPEDD completed a two-phase feasibility study to determine the most viable routes to safely connect Fall River and New Bedford, the two largest cities in the SMMPO region. The study was supported by Community Preservation Act funds in Westport, Dartmouth, and New Bedford, as well as a MassTrails grant. As a result of the feasibility study, the South Coast Bikeway moved forward with one of the options evaluated, referred to as the Northern Scenic Greenway, which proposes a shared use path that would link into to the terminus of the Quequechan River Rail Trail at the Fall River/Westport town line, then follow along the

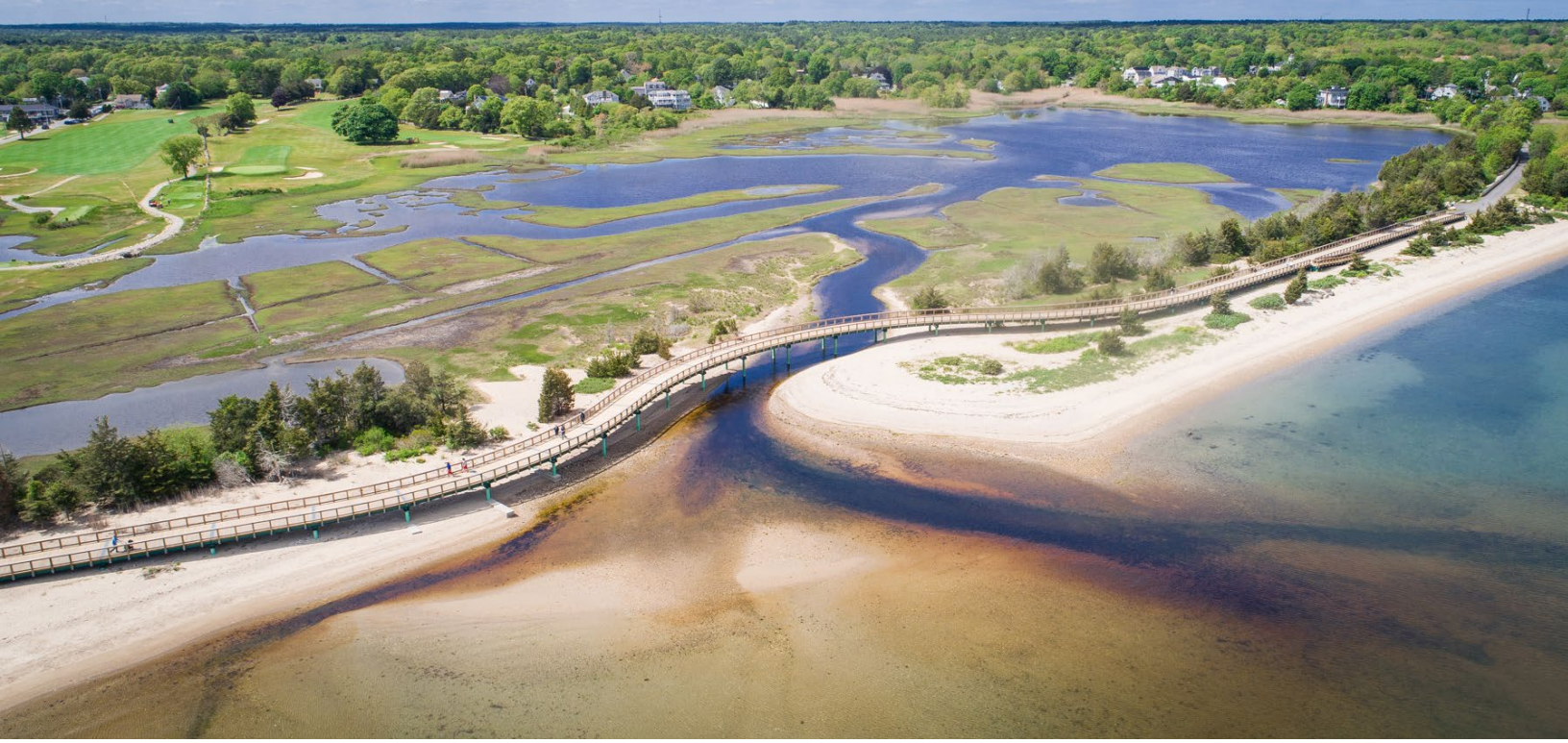


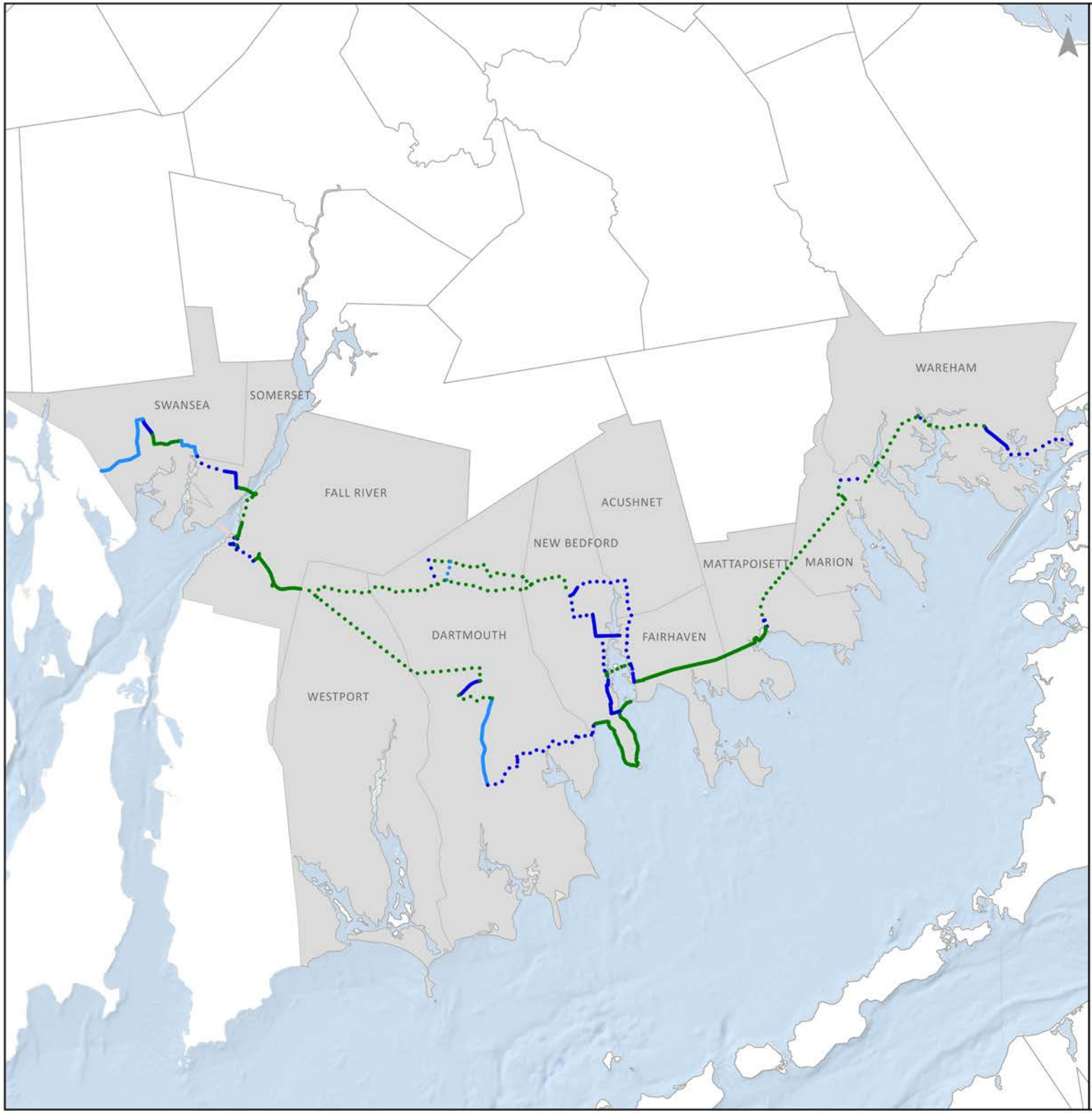
Image: The Shining Tides Mile in Mattapoisett shortly before its ribbon cutting in June 2023

side of route 6 in Westport for a short distance before heading north on Sanford Road and Old Bedford Road in Westport, Old Fall River Road in Fall River, Old Plainville Road, New Plainville Road, and Mount Pleasant Street in New Bedford leading to the intersection of Kings Highway at Mount Pleasant Street in New Bedford's North End, where the bikeway splits and continues both south and east.

The New Bedford Blue Lane is a proposed north-south connection from the City's CoveWalk and HarborWalk on the South End to the planned RiverWalk in the North End, linking the port of New Bedford, downtown New Bedford, the New Bedford MBTA station, and various other community assets with a cohesive bicycle and pedestrian path. In 2023, the City of New Bedford received a $1.75M federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to fund design and permitting for the Blue Lane. Adjacent to the Blue Lane, a bicycle and pedestrian ramp will lead from the north side of the Route 6 New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge safely to MacArthur Drive, where it will connect to the City's new MBTA station. This crucial ramp has been funded on the TIP and it is proposed to start construction in 2027. A shared use pathway connecting Coggeshall Street to Logan Street under the I-195 viaduct could also be a feasible pathway but would require further feasibility analysis.

Further west, UMass Dartmouth is considered a priority destination of the South Coast Bikeway. An alternative route for connecting UMass Dartmouth to the South Coast Bikeway route includes potential future improvements to add a physically separated shared use path along the side of Route 6, from Fall River to the power line easement just east of Cross Road in Dartmouth, where a shared use path could take the bikeway south to Old Westport Road and later Ring Road. This alternative route could further connect South Dartmouth to New Bedford's CoveWalk atop the New Bedford hurricane barrier by continuing south from UMass Dartmouth to Chase Road, Russells Mills Road, and Rogers Street in Dartmouth, and Padanaram Avenue and Cove Street in New Bedford. Another potential linkage between UMass Dartmouth and the Northern Scenic Route could utilize Faunce Corner Road which has wide shoulders and bike lanes for portions of its length. Recent improvements to the Faunce Corner Road bridge over I-195 added bike lanes and a 10' wide shared use path which has improved safety for bicyclists on this portion of roadway.

Image: the newly re-constructed I-195 overpass at Faunce Corner Road in Dartmouth.



South Coast Bikeway

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

Sources: SRPEDD, MassGIS, ESRI
Date: October 2023
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Progress continues on the routing for the South Coast Bikeway in Fall River, anchored by the Quequechan River Rail Trail (QRRT) which has become a fixture of the community. A recent extension of the QRRT to the border of Fall River and Westport completes the City of Fall River's most easterly section of the South Coast Bikeway and primes the Town of Westport for picking up the pathway and extending it further east. Potential improvements along Route 6 in Westport by MassDOT must prioritize the integration of shared use path alongside the corridor to enable the further development of the South Coast Bikeway in Westport and Dartmouth. Of particular note, the intersection of Route 6 at Sanford Road should provide enhanced safety measures including shared use path and pedestrian refuge islands to allow for the planned Northern Scenic Greenway to continue north from that point in the safest manner possible for vulnerable road users utilizing the SCB.

Further west, MassDOT's long planned demolition and overhaul of Route 79 along Fall River's waterfront is currently under construction. This project will address a longstanding need to better connect Fall River residents to the Taunton River, addressing the exceptionally wide layout and high speeds along the Route 79 corridor. The new Route 79 corridor will open many acres of land for new development along the waterfront and will include approximately two miles of shared use paths connecting the existing Veteran's Memorial Bridge shared use path at Wellington Street all the way to Fall River Heritage State Park. In addition, the Route 79/ Braga Bridge Improvements Project, completed by MassDOT in 2016, has enhanced multimodal travel to important city landmarks in the vicinity of the Braga Bridge such as the Gates of the City, Battleship Cove, Fall River Heritage State Park, as well as boating facilities. The new bike lanes and a shared use path leading east from the waterfront completed a section of the South Coast Bikeway between the Heritage State Park and the QRRT.

In Somerset, the South Coast Bikeway route continues to advance with the recent addition of bike lanes on Brayton Avenue and Read Street, linking to the South Elementary School. In Swansea, progress continues on a potential TIP project along Swansea Mall Drive from Wood Street to Route 6, which would extend the existing shared use path along Milford Road and better connect the existing shared use path to SRTA's Route 14 bus stops and businesses along Swansea Mall Drive. A MassDOT Complete Streets Program grant on Bark Street in Swansea will also complement the SCB by adding bike lanes just north of the SCB route through Swansea and Somerset.

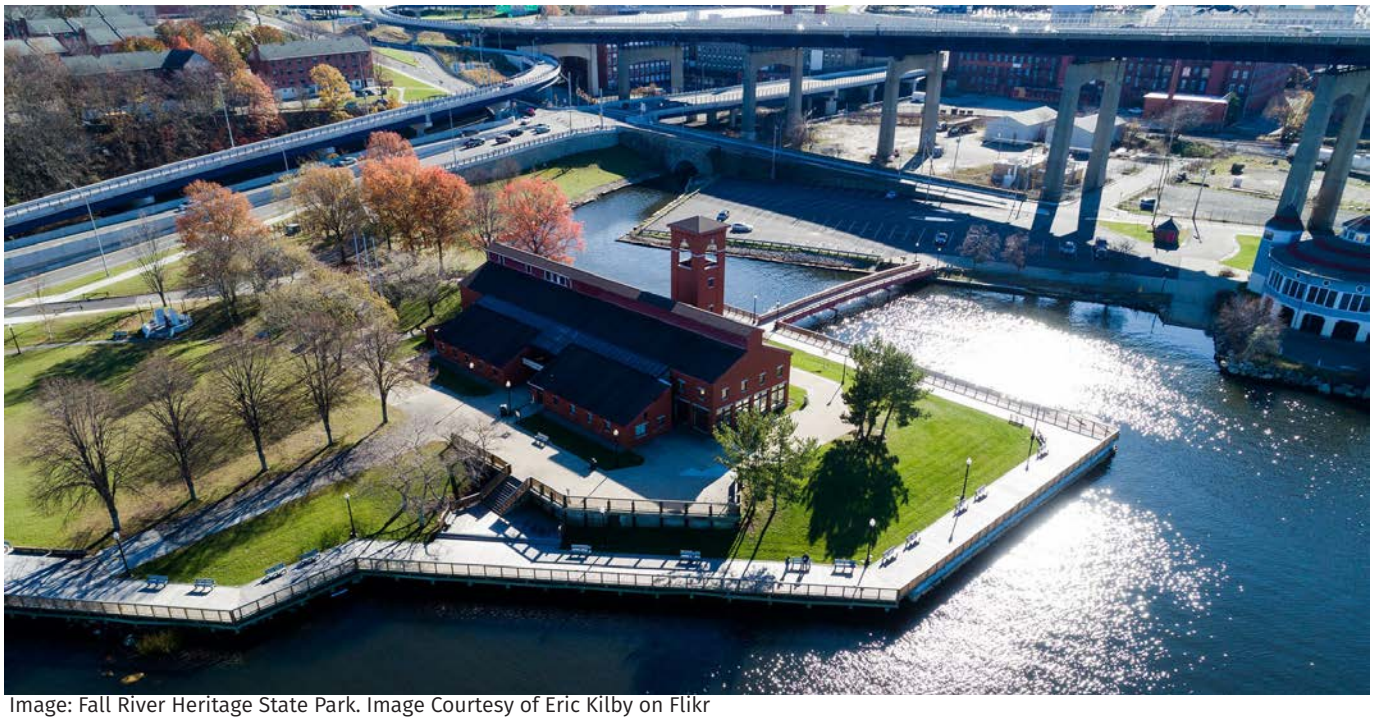


Image: Fall River Heritage State Park. Image Courtesy of Eric Kilby on Flikr

Taunton River Trail

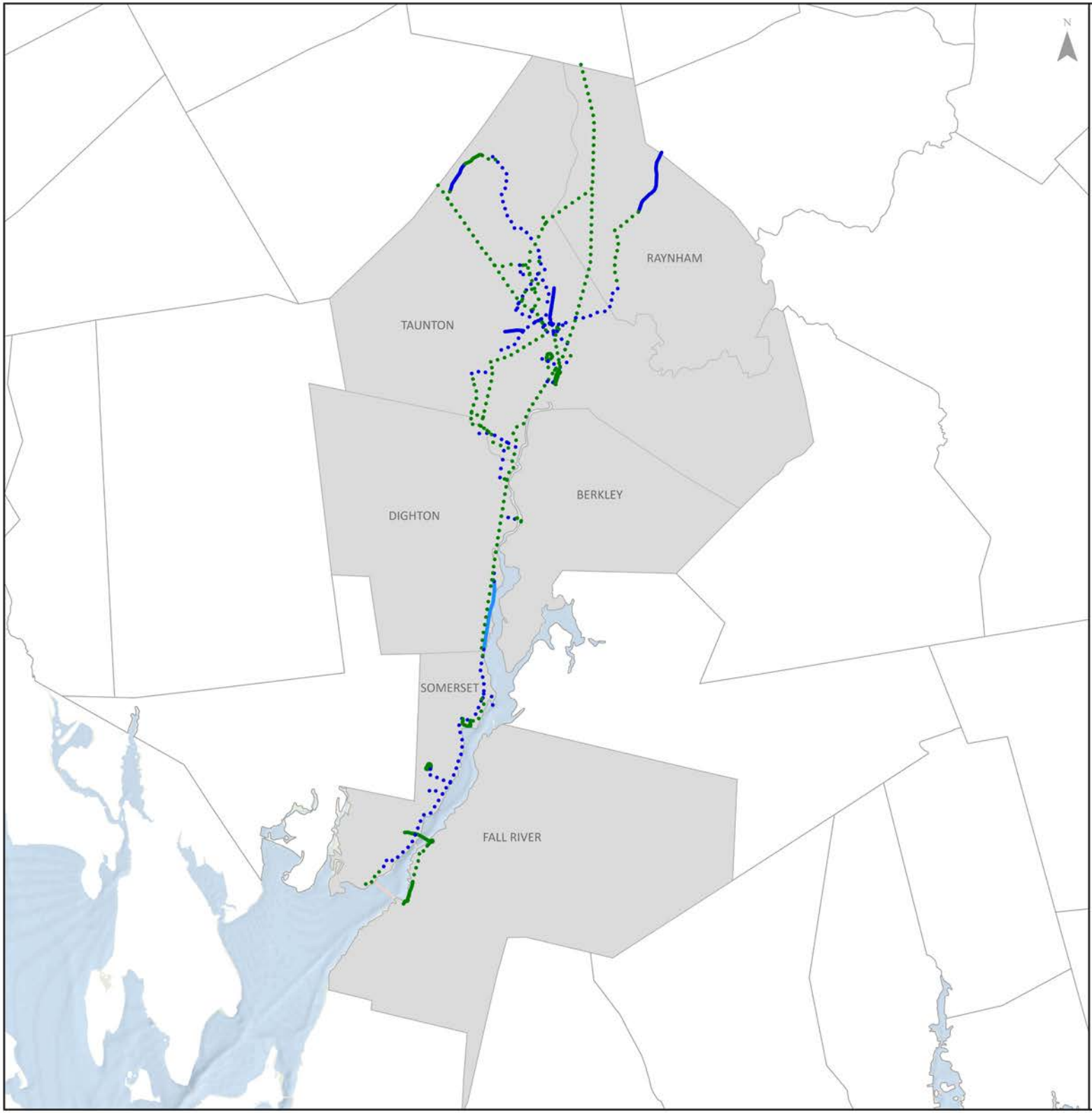
The Taunton River Trail (TRT), once realized, will be a continuous 22+ mile network of shared use paths and protected bicycle lanes extending from the mouth of the Taunton River at Fall River Heritage State Park northward through Fall River, Somerset, Dighton, Taunton, and Raynham mostly along the federally designated Wild & Scenic Taunton River, and ending at the Taunton/Norton town line to the northwest, the Raynham/Easton town line to the north, and the Raynham/Bridgewater town lines to the northeast. The Taunton River Trail would connect directly into many dense urban areas in Fall River and Taunton and serve as a commuter bikeway into and out of those cities as well as the backbone of a high-comfort and low stress bicycle network along the Taunton River, providing safe cycling for everyday trips and recreational purposes.

At its proposed northwestern terminus, the TRT will connect to the southern terminus of the World War II Veterans Memorial Trail, a nearly completed 7-mile stretch of shared use path through Mansfield and Norton. The World War II Veterans Memorial Trail starts at the Mansfield MBTA station and ends at the Myles Standish Industrial Park in Taunton, which hosts over 7,000 jobs. The proposed central trailhead for the TRT would utilize the inactive railroad corridor alongside the Whittenton neighborhood of Taunton to connect to Broadway (Route 138) in Raynham and could connect further north to the planned South Coast Rail Phase 2 MBTA station adjacent to Raynham Park, the site of the former Raynham dog track. The proposed northeastern trailhead for the Taunton River Trail would take the path across shared use path along King Philip Street in Raynham and continue to the Raynham/Bridgewater town line at Route 104, a little over a half mile from the boat ramp at Lake Nippenicket.

The original design concept for the Taunton River Trail, consisting of a trail linking Pierce Beach in Somerset to the Gertrude M. Boyden Wildlife Sanctuary in Taunton, was first completed as a study in 1994 by students at the Conway School of Landscape Design for SRPEDD. Since its initial design concept, the TRT vision has been extended to ensure connectivity with other trail networks in the region. Once fully realized, the Taunton River Trail will serve as an essential north/south backbone route, linking into the South Coast Bikeway route in Somerset and Fall River to enable safe bicycle and pedestrian travel through Southeastern Massachusetts into Rhode Island, Cape Cod, and Greater Boston.

In May 2023, the SMMPO voted to fund construction of a shared use path segment of the TRT within the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for federal fiscal years 2024-2028, with a target date for construction in 2028. This 2.5-mile pathway will run along the former railroad right-of-way from Weir Street in Taunton to the former rail junction at Railroad Avenue in Taunton. At this project's northern trailhead on Weir Street, the TRT is further extended along Weir Street north towards the Taunton Green on bike lanes recently funded by the Commonwealth's Complete Streets Program. From its southern trailhead at the Railroad Avenue junction, the trail could later be extended to continue both south and west. The TRT presents numerous opportunities for water-based recreation, linking to several canoe and kayak put-in facilities, fishing areas, and other nature-based recreation, historical, and cultural heritage sites along its entire route. One of the most scenic portions of the TRT will be a proposed 2-mile shared use path in Dighton through Sweets Knoll State Park, which has pristine views of the Wild & Scenic Taunton River. The National Parks Service first commissioned a concept design of a multimodal trail along the rail bed in Sweets Knoll State Park in 2015.

In 2022, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and their consultant Horsley Witten Group initiated the formal design process for the Sweets Knoll State Park trail, from Sandpiper Way in North Dighton to Somerset Ave in South Dighton. The Dighton Trails Committee further initiated a trail feasibility study to identify pathways north and south of the proposed shared use path through



Taunton River Trail

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

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Image: Sweets Knoll State Park defunct railroad bridge, part of the planned Taunton River Trail

Sweets Knoll State Park. In June 2023, the Town of Dighton was awarded a MassTrails grant for the design and engineering of a parking area and trailhead behind Dighton Town Hall adjacent to the former railroad right-of-way.

A southern route extension would connect to the planned Sweets Knoll State Park shared use path and further points south, including the Broad Cove Nature Trail in Dighton, as well as the Broad Cove Coastal Access Trail in Somerset. The route through Somerset would need to create bikeway on existing streets along the coast to connect the TRT to the point where the trail route converges with the South Coast Bikeway at the Veteran's Memorial Bridge. With an aim at creating the highest comfort bikeway separated from fast vehicle traffic, physically separated bike lanes or shared use path should be considered along Riverside Avenue, Pleasant Street, High Street, Main Street, County Street, Old Colony Ave, Avon Street, and/or South Street in Somerset to connect residents and trail users along the waterfront and advance a north-south connection from Broad Cove to Village Waterfront Park and boat ramp, Pierce Beach, Veteran's Memorial Bridge, and the Slade's Ferry Crossing District.

The Town of Somerset has established the Slade's Ferry Crossing Overlay District to promote and encourage redevelopment in this area. The district is intended to promote and encourage redevelopment to transform the area into a vibrant, attractive, and livable mixed-use location with a sense of place. The mixed-use district would further support and strengthen the development of a riverfront park, bike paths, fishing pier, and other bike and pedestrian-friendly amenities. In 2023 and 2024, SRPEDD will work with the Town of Somerset to create a Slade's Ferry Neighborhood Plan that will help guide the redevelopment of this neighborhood in town which sits at the intersection of the SMMPO region's two major backbone bike networks, the South Coast Bikeway and Taunton River Trail.

South from Slade's Ferry, an additional trail spur in Somerset could be explored to further connect the TRT south to Brayton Point, by running along the coast and under the Braga Bridge, via Frances Street or Walker Street across National Grid's right-of-way. This spur could also serve as an evacuation route for the area south of I-195 in any emergency incident blocking access through Brayton Point Road.
In Taunton, an additional Taunton River Trail spur route could connect into Taunton's Phase 1 bike path at the east end of Railroad Avenue and travel west down Railroad Avenue or continue the shared use path down the railroad right-of-way through Taunton and into North Dighton where it would connect to Warner Boulevard, the Mount Hope Mill Complex, and the Boyden Wildlife Sanctuary in Taunton, potentially via an existing pedestrian bridge across the Three Mile River between the Mount Hope Mill Complex in North Dighton and the Boyden Wildlife Sanctuary in Taunton. The former railroad spur that connects Railroad Avenue to Warner Boulevard is owned by the Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant.

Warner Boulevard has an exceptionally wide right-of-way without sidewalks and sufficient existing roadway pavement width (40+ feet) to provide a ten-foot-wide barrier-separated bikeway using flexible traffic delineator posts, planters, jersey barriers, or some other form of separation. A shared use path on this roadway could be low cost and enable safer access to grocery, pharmacy, and recreation opportunities into the Boyden Wildlife Sanctuary with very little impact on motorists.

Amongst many federal, state, and regional partners, the Taunton River Trail vision is supported locally by the City of Taunton Pathways Committee, the Town of Dighton Trails Committee, as well as the Friends of the Taunton Pathways, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit entity formed to strengthen support of the trail development process and expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the Greater Taunton area.
The northern sections of the Taunton River Trail remain unclear, and further feasibility analysis will be needed to identify the best routes for high-comfort bikeway from Weir Street in Taunton to the two proposed northern trailheads in Norton and Raynham.

Image: Defunct Pedestrian Bridge over Three Mile River between Taunton and North Dighton

Mansfield/Norton Rail Trail

The World War II Memorial Trail in Mansfield begins close to downtown Mansfield, with the official northern trailhead located on East Street in Mansfield. However, newly upgraded ADA accessible wide sidewalks along Old Colony Road and North Main Street extend the pathway north into downtown, with the trail anchored by the Mansfield MBTA station further north. Heading south from East Street, a 10-foot-wide paved shared use path is paired next to an adjacent 5-foot-wide gravel path and follows the former Old Colony Railroad right-of-way south to Fruit Street in Mansfield, near the north end of the Mansfield Municipal Airport.

With the help of advocacy from the Norton Alternative Transportation Committee, a long-awaited extension of the bike path south through the Town of Norton was programmed in the SMMPO's FFY2022 TIP at $3.8 million with Statewide Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, with construction on this extension commenced in Spring 2023. Towards the south end of the Mansfield Municipal Airport, the path extension will detour to North Washington Street and Cobb Street in Norton, to safely traverse above I-495. Once the Norton extension is completed, the pathway will total approximately 6.5 miles and come to its southern terminus near the Norton town line at the Myles Standish Industrial Park.

In 2018, the Town of Mansfield added a new wide sidewalk spur from the rail trail headed east to the intersection of Park Street, Hope Street, and East Street. From there, further connections could be made to the Mansfield Memorial Park athletic fields and skatepark, Mansfield Public Library, and Council on Aging on Hope Street and Robinson Elementary School, Jordan Jackson Elementary School, and Mansfield High School on East Street. North of the Mansfield MBTA station, the Greater Boston regional planning agency, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), has identified on their Trails Network Plan the possibility to extend the Mansfield rail trail network north into Foxborough. This proposed connection to Foxborough would link into Gillette Stadium and allow New England Patriots & Revolution fans or stadium concertgoers an opportunity to walk or ride a bike to the regionally significant venue, an increasingly attractive option to avoid Route 1 traffic on event days.

This proposed northern extension could potentially extend further north along the existing railroad right of way to the Metacomet Greenway in Walpole, or to Medfield where it could link into to the Bay Colony Rail Trail, which is included in the MassTrails Priority Trails Network and leads towards the planned Boston Greenbelt via Dover, Needham, and Newton. The Boston Greenbelt Trail is MAPC's proposed 90-mile trail circling Boston and connecting to major parks and open spaces, mostly along the Charles River.

Image: a mother and child enjoy the Mansfield Bike Path in Spring 2023

Mansfield Norton Trail

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Shared Lane Marking
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

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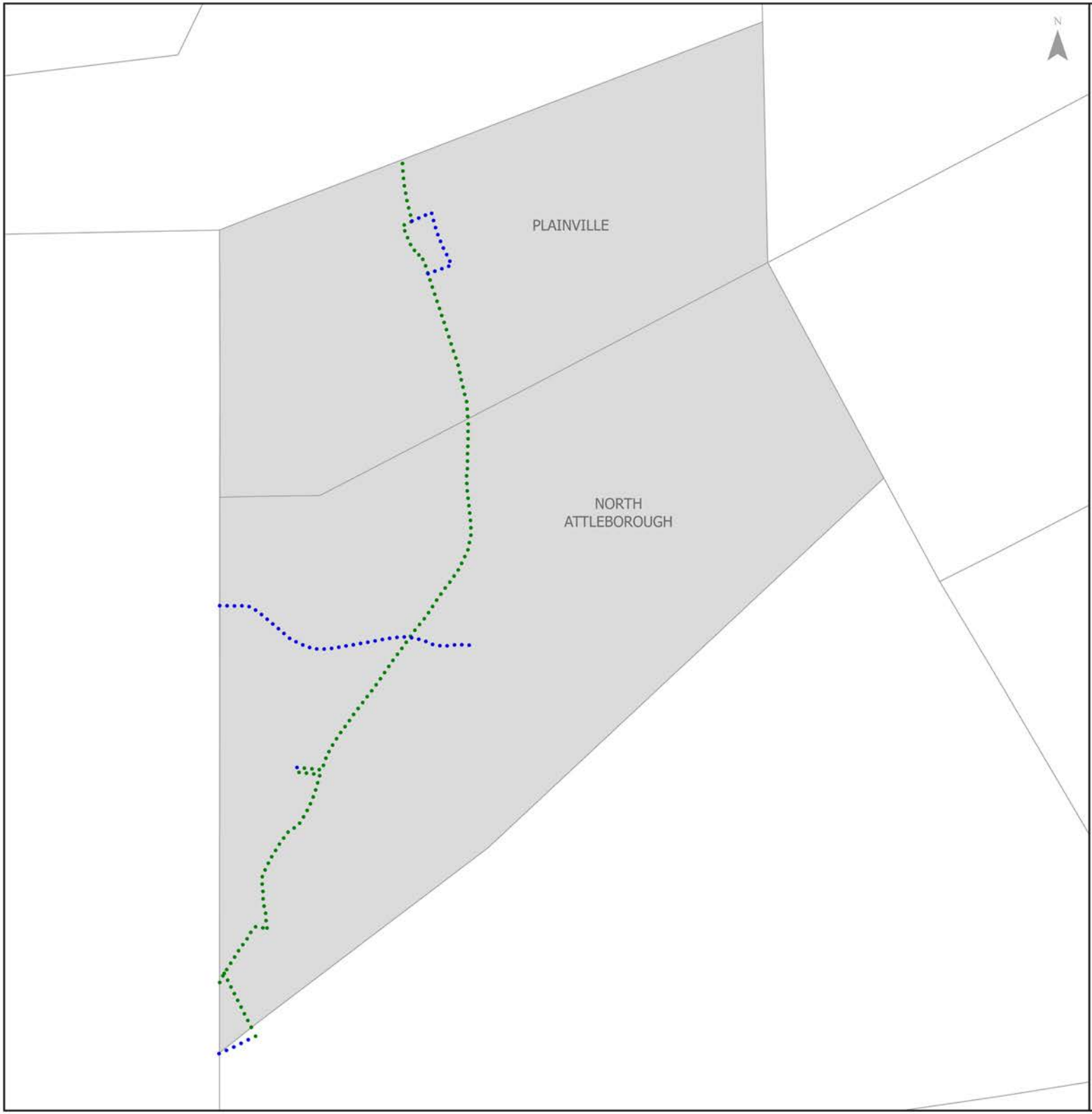
Ten Mile River Trail / Metacomet Greenway

The Ten Mile River Trail is a proposed 17-mile shared use path utilizing the abandoned Old Colony Railroad corridor to connect Walpole, Norfolk, Wrentham, Plainville, and North Attleborough, and Attleboro up to the Rhode Island state line. Plainville, North Attleborough, and Attleboro are SRPEDD member communities, while Walpole, Norfolk, and Wrentham are members of MAPC. The Ten Mile River Trail could one day provide a safe north/south bike and pedestrian travel linkage through the area. The Metacomet Greenway Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that originated in 2020 as a group of citizen volunteers working to advance this regional trail concept in coordination with the municipalities along the route.

In Plainville, a large segment of the former railroad right of way is owned by the Town of Plainville, and another large segment is owned by National Grid. One segment of the former railroad right-of-way was developed into the Plainville Commerce Park, and if a route through the park is not feasible, a detour around that section could potentially go down Fuller Street, South Street (Route 1A), and Cross Street. The railbed meets at the town line near the intersection of Carleton Road in Plainville and Fletcher Street in North Attleborough. In North Attleborough, a substantial length of the old railroad bed is owned by a single private entity from the Plainville town line south to Huntsbridge Road. Towards the southwestern corner of

North Attleborough, I-295 bisects the old railroad right-of-way and no tunnel or bridge exists under the highway. The Town of North Attleborough has been actively planning routing options for the Ten Mile River Trail for many years and continues to advance this regional trail vision. North of Plainville, the proposed trail could connect to various points of interest including the Wrentham State Forest, Wrentham Village Premium Outlets, Downtown Wrentham, William A. Rice Recreation Area, and the Walpole MBTA Station. From a potential southern terminus in North Attleborough at Hickory Road (Route 120), a shared use path or protected bike lanes could connect the Ten Mile River Trail to the Blackstone River Greenway in Rhode Island. Route 120 is listed as a priority roadway for bicycle improvements on the Rhode Island Bicycle Mobility Map, an interactive web map produced by the State of Rhode Island's Division of Statewide Planning, and it should also be considered a priority bikeway within the SMMPO region between the state border and Route 1 in North Attleborough. For the potential portions of the Ten Mile River Trail south of Route 120, connections to Attleboro would require additional feasibility analysis.



Ten Mile River Trail

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

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Attleboro & Seekonk Bikeways

As state border communities, Attleboro and Seekonk both have numerous potential linkages to existing and planned regional bikeways in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Notably, both communities are in close proximity to several of Rhode Island's completed greenways including the Ten Mile River Greenway, the Blackstone River Greenway, and the East Bay Bike Path. Attleboro could further develop connections to the Mansfield/Norton rail trail, as well as the planned Ten Mile River Trail in North Attleborough. Both Attleboro and Seekonk will benefit from the future improved South Attleboro MBTA station and could plan bike routes to this important transit center.

In 2021, the Downtown Attleboro Action Strategy provided several recommendations to advance bicycling in Attleboro, particularly biking into downtown to enhance mobility and economic development initiatives around the Attleboro MBTA station transit-oriented development district. The report cites the need for continual bicycle infrastructure improvements throughout downtown and the need to make provisions for bicycle parking and bike priority routes. The Downtown Action Strategy calls for investments in downtown bike infrastructure and recommends the development of a bike sharing program for the area. Of particular note, Route 123 connects the state border to downtown Attleboro, and further points east to connect Route 123 to Wheaton College and Norton's section of the World War II Memorial Trail. Route 123 has been identified as a priority route for future safe bicycle infrastructure investment by town officials. In addition, the State of Rhode Island is currently planning the addition of bike lanes on Route 123 to the Cumberland/Attleboro border, which could provide a safe connection to the Blackstone River Greenway for Attleboro area cyclists.

In Seekonk, the Seekonk Bikeway is a town-wide system of linked bike routes, loops, and paths intended to provide linkages between Seekonk's neighborhoods, community services and sites, commercial areas, surrounding communities, and regional and interstate bike path systems. In total, the Seekonk Bikeway is comprised of over 53 miles of designated bikeways. Additional opportunities in Seekonk exist to expand bike infrastructure, such as the rail line which runs from the southwest to northeast areas of town. The Seekonk Bikeway proposes that a portion of the rail line right of way could house a shared use path and portions of such a path could be incorporated into additional routes.

Both Attleboro and Seekonk are in the initial steps of the State's Complete Streets Program and are developing a comprehensive Complete Streets policy.

Middleborough & Carver Bikeways

As rural communities, Middleborough and Carver both have unique natural resources and recreational areas. Potential linkages to commercial areas, conservation lands, and water resources characterize many of the potential bikeways for each of these two communities. Downtown Middleborough, Pratt Farm, and the Nemasket River in Middleborough are three key local sites for the development of priority bicycle routes. In Carver, municipal beaches at John's Pond and Sampson's pond, as well as the Myles Standish State Forest are key bike route destinations.

In addition, several viable routes to connect Middleborough and Carver to the Plymouth area exist and should be developed in coordination with the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). One such route would follow South Meadow Road from Carver into Plymouth, which would also link into the Plymouth Municipal Airport. Middleborough has the opportunity to connect northwest into the emerging Taunton River Trail and potential North/South connection south of the Brockton area particularly if high-comfort bicycle improvements, such as a shared use path, are added to Route 28. Middleborough and Carver both have the potential to interconnect to the South Coast Bikeway route south into Wareham. In Carver, the following streets make up a bike network that provides community connectivity, are particularly scenic, and could use additional bike accommodations: France Street, Cross Street, Beaver Dam Road, Pope's Point Road, Meadow Street, Rochester Road, Indian Street, Cranberry Road, and Wareham Street.

Both Middleborough and Carver have adopted Complete Streets policies and prioritization plans that create proposed bicycle networks in each community. In 2022, the Town of Middleborough was awarded a Complete Streets grant to make bicycle and pedestrian improvements to North Main Street, between Reland Street and North Street, which will add bike lanes and begin the creation of a Downtown Middleborough to Pratt Farm bikeway connector. Bicycle improvements to Routes 28 and 58 would have substantial benefits for safety and connectivity in Middleborough and Carver and are feasible given these roadways' wide rights-of-ways. West of downtown Middleborough, improvements on Route 105 would enhance walkability and bikeability between the newly constructed Middleborough MBTA station and Lakeville's existing transit-oriented district around the site of the Middleborough/Lakeville MBTA station. The Middleborough/Lakeville MBTA station will only be seasonally used for Cape Flyer Service beginning in early 2024.

Image: cranberry bogs in Carver offer scenic views and ample space for recreational bike rides

Mount Hope Bay Greenway

The Mount Hope Bay Greenway, a 19-mile proposed shared use path through the southern end of Fall River and connecting to Tiverton, Portsmouth, Middletown, and Newport, Rhode Island is another trail of importance to the region. The proposed northern trailhead at the future Battleship Cove MBTA station in Fall River is also in close proximity to two other regional priority trail networks, the South Coast Bikeway and Taunton River Trail. A feasibility study was completed for the City of Fall River in 2021 which identified the best strategies to bring the shared use path to fruition, and the potential need for the greenway to include "rails with trails," or shared use path adjacent to railroad tracks. South from the future Battleship Cove MBTA station, the path could extend along Fall River's waterfront, through Kennedy Park, to the state border with Tiverton, Rhode Island. Two advocacy groups, Bike Fall River and Bike Tiverton, have long been advocates for this interstate pathway.

The proposed route south would cross the existing shared use path at the Sakonnet River Bridge and head south all the way to the bus depot at the Newport Transportation and Visitors Center, which is a short walk from the historic tourism corridor of Thames Street in Newport. In Portsmouth, an alternative route could take the path over the Mount Hope Bridge into Bristol, Rhode Island to link into the southern terminus of the East Bay Bike Path which extends north to Providence. On Aquidneck Island, a portion of the railroad is also used by Rail Explorers USA, a company that utilizes a pedal powered vehicle that rides on railroad tracks for a unique tourism attraction.

The Mount Hope Bay Greenway is a priority for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, and the Town of Tiverton, and efforts are underway in Rhode Island to make this vision a reality. This interstate greenway is listed on the Rhode Island Bicycle Mobility Map, and several sections have already been funded on Rhode Island's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Bike Route to Greater Boston

MassTrails is an inter-agency collaborative of the Governor's Office, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), MassDOT, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). In 2023, MassTrails announced the release of its interactive Priority Trails Network Vision map for current and future shared use path projects throughout the Commonwealth. The map highlights key statewide rail trails and shared use path projects that will help support the vision for a comprehensive statewide trail network and address key gaps in the state's trails network.

A significant gap in the MassTrails priority network exists between the South Coast communities and the Greater Boston area. Although the South Coast Bikeway is included in the priority network map, there are no other priority areas designated between the South Coast Bikeway and the Route 28 corridor in Brockton. Further collaborative interregional planning efforts will be needed to build a truly interconnected statewide network, linking these two majors regions of the state. A Massachusetts-based north-south connection is needed, as the current routing relies on connections through Rhode Island to get to Massachusetts' South Coast Bikeway, depriving Southeastern Massachusetts communities of the economic and health benefits that shared use paths provide local communities. A north/south southeastern Massachusetts connection will also be a critical tool for reducing emissions from commuter trips within the region's cities and help the state reach its 2050 climate goals. There is a significant need to identify north/south connections through Southeastern Massachusetts to connect the Greater Boston area priority network to the Commonwealth's South Coast and Cape Cod priority network. This north south link will likely have outsized positive impacts on several Gateway Cities in the region that could be connected by this north/south route including Brockton, Taunton, and Fall River. The Taunton River Trail is considered a backbone of this potential north-south route, which would increase the regional connectivity of Southeastern Massachusetts, link the two planning regions of OCPC and SRPEDD, and provide an alternative routing option to Cape Cod in addition to the proposed Claire Saltonstall Bikeway from Boston to Cape Cod.

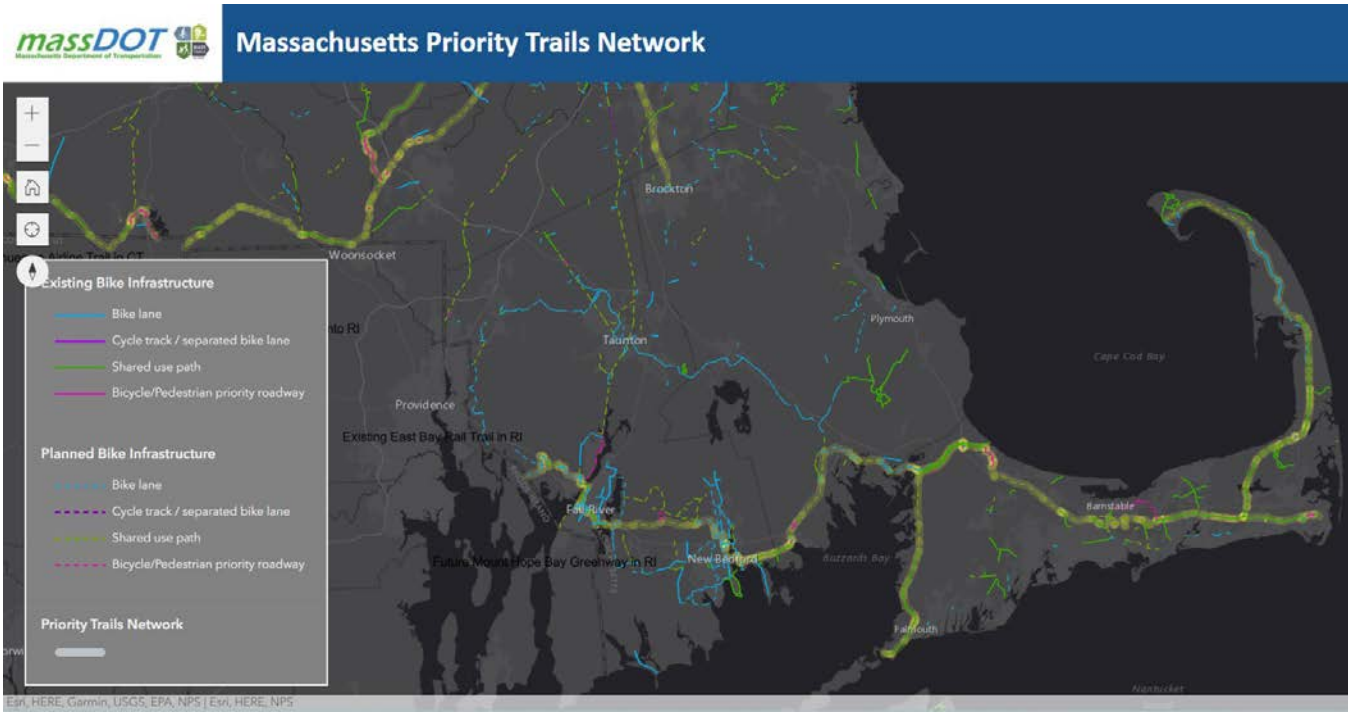


Image: MassTrails Priority Trails Network Map, with significant gap between Brockton and the South Coast

Bike Routes in Acushnet, Berkley, Freetown, Lakeville, Rochester, and Rehoboth

These rural communities within the region have viable pathways to connect into the many of the regional networks mentioned above.

Berkley – connect to Taunton River Trail via the Berkley Dighton Bridge, or via Weir Village in Taunton. Connect to the Dighton Rock State Park, Berkley Community School, Berkley Middle School, and Berkley Common. Connections to Taunton could also provide access to greater mobility through GATRA fixed route bus routes in Weir Village and the East Taunton MBTA station.

Acushnet – connect to South Coast Bikeway west via Tarkiln Hill Road or Slocum Street into New Bedford, or south via Main Street and Alden Road into Fairhaven. Connection to the MBTA Commuter Rail stations and SRTA fixed route bus routes in New Bedford via Tarkiln Hill Road or Acushnet Avenue will also improve mobility options.

Freetown – connect to South Coast Bikeway via various routes south into Fall River, or north to the Taunton River Trail via Friend Street or North Main Street into Berkley towards Dighton. Additional bikeway routes are also needed for the new Freetown MBTA station, Assonet Village, East Freetown Village, Freetown State Forest, Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, Freetown Elementary School, as well as the Apponequet Regional High School campus in Rochester.

Lakeville – connect to the Apponequet Regional High School, Ted Williams Camp, new Middleborough and Freetown MBTA stations, Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, Massasoit State Park.
Rochester – connect to the South Coast Bikeway via Route 105 into Marion, or Fearing Hill Road into Wareham, and connect to Dexter Lane Field, Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School, Mary's Pond, and other recreational assets.

Rehoboth – connect to the South Coast Bikeway via Swansea, or Taunton River Trail via County Street into West Dighton. Rehoboth also has numerous opportunities to connect to the Seekonk Bikeway routes with additional links to Rhode Island. The wide right-of way widths on Routes 44 and 118 could provide space for separated shared use paths on these roads.

Bike Policy & Programs

There are numerous policies and programs in place at the federal, state, and local levels that impact bicycle transportation, connectivity, planning, design, construction and funding. While funding for these activities continues to increase, it is still insufficient to realize the level of connectivity and safety that will significantly increase daily bicycle ridership.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Committees

Of the 27 SRPEDD member municipalities, 9 have a dedicated bicycle or pedestrian advisory committee. The names of these committees vary but they all have a goal to enhance bicycle or pedestrian activities and infrastructure in their communities either for off-road, on road, or both types of routes. Bike and pedestrian advisory committees are useful partners that municipalities can collaborate with to actively plan for bike and pedestrian routes and infrastructure, conduct studies, understand residents' concerns and needs, conduct outreach activities, and identify funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects. This plan has also identified the need to better link these committees into the complete streets prioritization process that all municipalities participating in MassDOT's Complete Streets Program must complete to be eligible for construction funding grants. Local Department of Public Works can collaborate with bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees to create Complete Street Prioritization Plans that bring together a wide array of perspectives, lived experiences, and reflect the needs of community members who frequently walk, bike, or use transit. For communities beginning the complete streets planning process or revisiting their prioritization plans, local officials should consider the creation of bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees to assist in the process of prioritizing roadway improvements. SRPEDD staff are also available to assist in this process.

Municipality	Committee Name
Acushnet	Acushnet Cyclist/Pedestrian Safety Committee
Carver	Carver Trail and Conservation Stewards
Dartmouth	Dartmouth Pathways Committee
Dighton	Dighton Trails Committee
Fairhaven	Fairhaven Bikeway Committee
Fall River	Fall River Bike Committee
Marion	Marion Pathways Committee
Mattapoisett	Mattapoisett Bike Path Study Committee
Norton	Norton Alternative Transportation Committee
Taunton	Taunton Pathways Committee
Westport	Westport Bike/Walking Path Committee

Bike Parking

Any good investment in bicycling infrastructure should include secure bicycle parking. Bicyclists need a safe and secure place to store their bicycle at the start and end of every trip. Properly designed bicycle facilities should be conveniently located near entrances/exits and should be accessible for everyone. Several resources are available for the design of bicycle parking facilities; the most commonly used is the Association of Pedestrians and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) Bicycle Parking Guide. Some communities have adopted their own guidelines or bylaws including the Town of Dartmouth, and the cities of Cambridge and Boston. Generally, all devices should meet the following criteria to provide the best facilities possible:

- Support for the bicycle by its frame horizontally in two or more places;
- Design that prevents the bicycle from tipping over;
- Ability to support a variety of bicycle sizes and shapes;
- Space to secure the frame and one or both wheels to the rack; and
- Allows access to each bicycle space when the racks are full (should follow ADA guidelines).

There is a lack of bicycle parking in general within the SMMPO Region, and many of the locations that have bicycle parking have racks in poor condition, with outdated designs or inadequate accessibility. The lack of accessible and secure bicycle parking could be a deterrent to many potential bicyclists. To assist communities with addressing the lack of adequate bicycle parking infrastructure, the SMMPO launched a bicycle parking program in 2014. This program provided communities the opportunity to be reimbursed for bicycle racks purchased through the program and installed on municipally-owned property including schools, parks, town halls, health services etc.

Proposed locations were evaluated and ranked by the SMMPO based on proximity to transit, environmental justice areas, population density and other factors. The program was funded with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds in the amount of $100,000. Shipping costs were not covered under the program and acted as the local match. The program was very successful, with the installation of 470 racks, adding 1642 bicycle parking spaces at 174 locations across the region.

Existing Bicycle Parking Facilities

- Bicycle Parking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

Sources: SRPEDD, MassGIS, ESRI
Date: October 2023
Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes.

Bike Share

Bike Share Programs are services that allow individuals to rent a bike from either a docked self-serve station or as a GPS located dockless bike. This service is often combined with transit hubs and is most beneficial for short distance point to point trips. Implementation of bike share programs should give careful consideration to demographics, environmental justice, proximity to transit stations/stops, recreational areas, bike paths, and other bicycle trip generators. The City of New Bedford launched a docked bikeshare system at several points in the city in 2017 through a partnership with Zagster. The Towns of Mattapoisett and Fairhaven and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth launched a pilot dockless bike share programs through VeoRide in 2018.

SRPEDD Bike & Pedestrian Count Program

SMMPO staff are available to help with gathering usage data related to bicycle and pedestrian planning. Our infrared TRAFx counters can be placed discretely along paths and sidewalks and count users over long periods of time. Municipalities interested in counts at specific locations can request counter placement through our Community Technical Assistance Program or by contacting SRPEDD staff. Learn more about SRPEDD's Bike & Pedestrian Count Program here.

Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan

The Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan is the State's roadmap to make biking a safe, comfortable, and convenient option for everyday travel. SPREDD supports the recommendations from the State Bike Plan. The plan introduces core concepts, definitions, key terms, and provides an overview of current facilities and practices in the Commonwealth. The plan describes the benefits of investing in biking, identifies emerging needs in the state related to biking, and details what the state is doing to promote bikeable communities. The state's Bicycle Plan is accompanied by its sister document, the Municipal Guide for Bikeability, which is detailed below. Lastly, the plan identifies a new set of initiatives, actions, and performance measures to address the needs identified during the plan's development.

Municipal Guide for Bikeability

MassDOT's Municipal Resource Guide for Bikeability introduces the core concepts of bikeability and provides an array of resources for local practitioners working to advance bike networks in local communities. The Guide is intended to provide municipalities—which own and maintain 80 percent of Massachusetts streets—with the tools and information needed to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient bike networks that appeal to the broadest base of people. The audience for this Guide is community practitioners: municipal staff, elected officials, volunteers, residents, and advocates.

MassDOT Complete Streets Program

Complete Streets refers to an approach to transportation policy and infrastructure design that ensures safe transportation options for all roadway users regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel. The approach, if adopted in all work, will help the Commonwealth meet its mobility and safety performance measures. The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program is a core component of the Commonwealth's efforts to advance complete streets roadway design.

The program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities that have passed a Complete Streets policy. Technical assistance funding of up to $50,000 is available for analysis in support of a Municipal Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Municipalities are eligible to receive up to $500,0000 in construction funding every four fiscal years for roadways identified in the municipality's Prioritization Plan. The Complete Streets program is a reimbursement program and projects require approval in advance. Eligible project types include intersection redesigns, pedestrian crossing modifications, street reconfigurations and traffic calming, pedestrian and bike network connections, transit investments, and environment and streetscape investments.

As of August 2023, 13 of the SMMPO's 27 municipalities have received construction funding for complete streets projects, with another 11 municipalities either having registered with the program or completed a prioritization plan. In total, 24 of the 27 SMMPO municipalities have begun participating in MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program, with only Berkley, Lakeville, and Rochester not having yet participated in the program.

The Program also continues to support municipalities in taking a comprehensive approach to making travel safer and more comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users through new training opportunities available from Baystate Roads, a training program of the UMass Transportation Center.

Massachusetts Vulnerable Road User Law

On April 1, 2023, a new vulnerable road user law went into effect in Massachusetts. This law has several components that were all passed as part of "An Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities" to increase roadway safety across Massachusetts. The legislature defined vulnerable road users as people walking and biking, roadside workers, people using wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards, roller skates, and other micromobility devices, horse-drawn carriages, as well as farm equipment. The new requirements of the law are detailed below.

1. Drivers will need to provide a "safe passing distance" of at least 4 feet when passing vulnerable road users. Massachusetts is the 36th state to define safe passing as at least 3 feet. Motorists are explicitly allowed to cross a double-yellow line to pass "when it is safe to do so and adhering to the roadway speed limit." MassDOT has provided thousands of roadway signs to municipalities across the state to reinforce this new law, and signs are available upon request.
2. A new requirement for the use of rear red lights at night will go into effect to ensure cyclists are visible on roadways. Bicyclists will now be required to use a front white light, rear red light, and rear reflector when riding at night. Police officers cannot use a bike light violation as a reason to stop a bicyclist. The lack of lights cannot be used as "conclusive evidence of contributory negligence" in a civil action, for instance when making an insurance claim.
3. The law clarifies the process for municipalities to alter speed limits in thickly settled areas from 30 mph to 25 mph both on state-controlled roads and on the roads they control. This is an update on the previously implemented Chapter90, Section 18, giving authority to local jurisdictions to create safer roadways in their communities.
4. To improve statewide data collection surrounding vulnerable road user crashes, a standardized analysis tool will now be used to report crashes and incidents involving a person biking or walking. Standardized crash reporting will systematically measure, report, and track crashes and will provide better data for transportation policymakers.
5. All too often, traffic injuries or fatalities are caused by right-hook accidents, which occur when a cyclist or pedestrian traveling on the right side of the road is struck by a driver making a right turn. To reduce this, state-contracted trucks that are class 3 or 10,000+ pounds will be required to be equipped with safety side guards, convex and cross-over mirrors, and backup cameras to reduce fatalities of people walking and biking.

This new data-driven law is just one step towards safer roadways in the Commonwealth, and it is part of the ongoing statewide advocacy work of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike) and the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition. MassBike's mission is to make bicycling an integral part of human-centered communities, policies, culture, and infrastructure in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition is committed to shifting the priority of transportation policies and projects from speed to safety, with the philosophy that crashes can be avoided if streets are designed to protect all people.

MassTrails Program

The MassTrails Program provides matching grants to municipalities, state or federal agencies, tribal governments, other governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations to design, create, and maintain a diverse network of trails used and enjoyed by Massachusetts residents and visitors. Applications are accepted annually for a variety of well-planned trail projects benefiting communities across the state. Grant amounts are dependent on the project and its needs, but generally range from $5,000 to $100,000 for local projects and up to $500,000 awarded to projects demonstrating critical network connections of statewide significance.

Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared use pathways, and the amenities that support trails.

MassTrails prioritizes building out the longer distance trail networks across the state, filling in critical gaps in existing networks, and overcoming current barriers to connectivity while taking into consideration the number of people that will potentially access a given project.

MassTrails grants are reimbursable, meaning grantees must first pay for expenditures and then submit for reimbursement using the required documentation. A 20% match of the total project cost is required for all MassTrails grants. Aside from monetary matching funds, a match can also include staff time, in kind contributions, and donations. Learn more about the MassTrails Grant Program here.

Transportation Improvement Program

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required under federal law to develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) covering a future period of the next five years. The TIP contains projects that are funded through a combination of federal and state funding, and each MPO's TIP is combined into the State's TIP (STIP) along with other statewide transportation projects. For Southeastern Massachusetts, the MPO is the Southeastern Massachusetts MPO (SMMPO), which is staffed by SRPEDD's transportation planning department. The TIP incorporates several federal funding programs, each with specific funding requirements. For bike related projects the TIP can be used to fund construction of projects. All other project costs such as design, right-of-way acquisition, and permitting are the responsibility of the community initiating the project.

All projects included in the TIP are evaluated and assigned a priority value or score. This process is used as a tool to identify projects of regional priority and program them for funding accordingly in the TIP. Each project is reviewed to evaluate the impact on, or sensitivity to, each of the criteria categories listed below, and to assist in meeting performance targets for safety, pavement preservation, mobility, freight movement, traffic congestion, and emissions.

Evaluation criteria categories include:

- Community Impact & Support – the community and public support of a project,
- Maintenance & Infrastructure – infrastructure to be repaired,
- Safety & Security – improvements to all modes for safer operation,
- Mobility / Congestion – to improve the efficiency of the transportation network,
- Livability / Sustainable Development – impacts to the surrounding land use, neighborhoods, and community,
- Environmental & Resiliency – the positive and negative environmental impacts.

The SMMPO region generally receives about $25+ million a year in TIP funding from the different funding categories. To be eligible for funding, a project must be approved through the MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC). More information on the TIP and developing a project can be found in SRPEDD's TIP Funding Guide, which can be found on the TIP webpage. The SMMPO has adopted a goal, which was recommended by the Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG), to use at least 10% of its annual TIP funding exclusively for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Massachusetts Chapter 90 Program

The Massachusetts Chapter 90 Program entitles cities and towns to receive reimbursements on approved transportation projects. Chapter 90 funding is allocated to communities based on a formula that incorporates community accepted roadway mileage and population. Projects must be approved in advance for the program and include a wide variety of project types from roadway reconstruction, design, bike facilities, salt sheds and others. Due to the large amount of uses and the limited amount of funding, Chapter 90 is in high demand and generally highly used by communities. It may be challenging to use Chapter 90 funding for proposed projects due to the need for project funding and the fact that communities generally program use of this funding in advance for specific projects. The development of the SMMPO Regional Transportation Plan identified a need to increase Chapter 90 funds, as the funding levels have not kept pace with the rising cost of transportation projects. According to the Massachusetts Municipal Association the program has lost nearly two-thirds of its purchasing power over the past 11 years. Chapter 90 is the main source of funding for roadway repairs in the region, and for many communities this is their only source of state funding for this purpose.

Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program

One of the challenges of the transportation system is the time needed to plan, design, and implement transportation infrastructure improvements. MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Program aims to ameliorate this challenge by provided funding to municipalities and public transit authorities to quickly implement improvements to plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and strengthened commerce. Depending on the project type, grant funds are available up to $500,000.

Healthy Transportation Policy Directive

To assist in supporting MassDOT's Complete Streets design standards, on September 9, 2013, the governor issued the Healthy Transportation Policy Directive which formalizes MassDOT's commitment to the implementation and maintenance of transportation networks that serve all mode choices for all users. The directive was issued to ensure that all MassDOT projects are designed and implemented in a way that all customers have access to safe and comfortable healthy transportation options at all MassDOT facilities and services. In order to ensure that healthy transportation modes are considered equally as potential solutions within project design, the Healthy Transportation Policy Directive requires the following:

- All MassDOT funded and/or designed projects shall seek to increase and encourage more pedestrian, bicycle and transit trips. MassDOT has established a statewide mode shift goal that seeks to triple the distance traveled by walking, bicycling and transit by 2030, promoting intermodal access to the maximum extent feasible to help the agency meet this goal.
- MassDOT funded and or designed projects that fail to provide facilities for healthy transportation modes shall require signoff by the Secretary and CEO of Transportation prior to advancing additional design work.
- MassDOT construction projects shall include provisions of off-road accommodations (shared use path, or bridge side path) or clearly designate safe travel routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users along existing facilities, including customers that fall under the protection of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is important that all communities take into consideration the Governor's Healthy Transportation Policy Directive when developing their local projects.

Engineering Directives

MassDOT released Engineering Directive E-20-001 in 2020 to update design criteria to help ensure that people of all ages and abilities are afforded the opportunity for safe travel regardless of mode in the design of future projects.

The directive states that bicycle facilities shall be designed in accordance with Chapter 5 and 11 of MassDOT's Project Development and Design Guide, the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, MassDOT's Separated Bike Lane Guide, and the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide. Bicycle facilities may include shared-use paths, side paths, separated bicycle lanes, buffered bicycle lanes, bicycle lanes, or paved outside shoulders. Facilities may provide service in a single direction of travel ("uni-directional") or two directions of travel ("bidirectional"). Bicycle facilities are required to be provided and shall provide service for each direction of vehicular travel for all roadways where bicycles are legally allowed, except roadways classified as local. The bicycle facility shall be a shared-use path, side path, separated bicycle lane, or buffered bicycle lane if any of the following apply:

- For all roadways with a posted (or statutory) speed limit greater than or equal to 40 miles per hour
- For all roadways with a volume greater than or equal to 10,000 vehicles per day
- For all roadways at locations with more than one travel lane in a single direction
- For all intersections with more than one travel lane in a single direction
- For all roadways classified as a corridor with a High Potential for Everyday Biking as defined in the Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan.

The minimum widths for various bicycle facilities are provided below.

Bicycle Facility	Minimum Width (feet)
Shared-Use Path	10
Side Path	10
Separated Bike Lane (one-way) *	5
Separated Bike Lane (two-way) *	8
Buffered Bike Lane *	5
Bike Lane	5
Shoulder	5

*Minimum width excludes buffer area

Bicycle Plan Public Outreach

SMMPO staff led various efforts to meaningfully engage the public in the development of this plan. The timing of the creation of this Regional Bike Plan coincided with the creation of the SMMPO's Regional Transportation Plan, which takes a broad look at a variety of different needs across the region for all modes of transportation. The recommendations outlined in this plan will also be included in the recommendations for the Regional Transportation Plan. Four open houses were held in Spring 2023 at public libraries in New Bedford, Fall River, Attleboro, and Taunton for the Regional Transportation Plan. Of particular note, some attendees at these open houses discussed their challenges cycling in the region, as well as accessing local bus transit services.

SMMPO staff coordinated and met with local leaders from 26 communities in the region. These local leaders included Mayors, Town Administrators, Select Board members, City Councilors, Town and City Planners, Department of Public Works staff, Police and Fire Chiefs, Conservation Agents, ADA Coordinators, and a variety of other municipal volunteers including leaders from local bicycle and pedestrian committees. The feedback received in these local meetings was critical to understanding the efforts being made locally to advance the transportation system as a whole, and the individual challenges communities are facing in advancing bicycle and pedestrian networks.

SMMPO staff created a public survey to gather feedback from the public, the results of which will be discussed later in this plan. The link to the survey was posted to over 30 different community Facebook groups from across the region as well as through SRPEDD's own social media channels. The survey further helped to identify the public's priorities related to biking in Southeastern Massachusetts and develop key themes to be incorporated into this plan. SMMPO staff also gave three public presentations regarding the Regional Bike Plan. The first was during Bay State Bike Month at the South Coast Bikeway's Annual Bike Summit held on May 9, 2023, at the historic James Arnold Mansion in New Bedford. The second was at the Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (MABPAB) meeting on July 26, 2023, at the Mattapoisett Fire Station. Staff also presented the Regional Bicycle Plan at a meeting of the Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) on August 9, 2023, at SRPEDD office in Taunton. Members of the JTPG provided useful feedback on this plan including amplifying the need for additional consideration of bike accommodations on local roadways, the prioritization of on-road bikeways over on-street parking spaces for private motorists, as well as the desire for enhanced physical separation to enable high-comfort bikeways within the region. Both the MABPAB & JTPG meetings were hybrid, held both remotely and in person.

Bike Plan Survey Results

A brief five-question survey was prepared by SRPEDD staff to gather community feedback about bicycle riding habits and barriers and desired locations for bicycle facility improvements. To promote the survey, staff distributed flyers at several bicycle committee meetings/advocacy events, including the 2023 Annual South Coast Bikeway Summit, other SRPEDD outreach events, including public listening sessions for the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan held at local public libraries, and other SRPEDD meetings. Staff also promoted the survey through social media posts on town-specific Facebook pages and through SRPEDD's own social media channels. Staff also created a short promotional video for the survey. The survey received 435 responses. To gain a sense of diverse geographic priorities for bicycling, survey respondents were asked to provide their zip codes. Respondents represented several SRPEDD communities, with the most responses coming from Norton (51), Swansea (42), Middleborough (36), and North Attleborough (35). At least one response was received from 26 of the 27 SRPEDD communities when distributing this survey, with only Freetown not receiving a response.

Municipality	Survey Responses	Municipality	Survey Responses
Acushnet	1	New Bedford	13
Attleboro	9	North Attleborough	35
Berkley	27	Norton	51
Carver	25	Plainville	2
Dartmouth	10	Raynham	2
Dighton	18	Rehoboth	9
Fairhaven	25	Rochester	2
Fall River	2	Seekonk	2
Lakeville	9	Somerset	14
Mansfield	29	Swansea	42
Marion	5	Taunton	12
Mattapoisett	7	Wareham	28
Middleborough	36	Westport	4

Age Groups

Because different age groups may have unique needs from a bicycle network, respondents were asked to identify their age group. Respondent ages skewed toward early to later middle age with the bulk of respondents being over 35 years old.

Age Group	Number of Responses
18-24	14 (3%)
25-34	60 (14%)
35-44	92 (21%)
45-54	97 (22%)
55-64	95 (22%)
65 or over	77 (18%)

Bicycle Riding Habits

When asked how often they bicycle, 37% of respondents reported bicycling a few times a week. However, another 20% reported either never riding a bicycle or only rarely riding a bicycle. There were no clear correlations between riders' age groups and their frequency of bicycle travel.

Age Groups	A few times a month	A few times a week	Every Day	I never ride a bicycle	Only on weekends	Rarely	Seasonally	Grand Total
18-24	0	1	9	2	1	1	0	14
25-34	7	19	11	4	5	9	5	60
35-44	10	42	11	3	1	9	16	92
45-54	10	32	6	9	5	15	20	97
55-64	13	42	3	5	11	12	9	95
65 or over	12	27	7	7	1	9	14	77
Grand Total	52	163	47	30	24	55	64	435

Reasons for Cycling

When asked their 3 primary reasons for cycling, respondents overwhelmingly responded that they bike for health and/or recreational purposes with 77% of respondents choosing this option. No other options were as popular, with environmental concerns being the only other option with a percentage in the double digits. Responses provided for the other option varied widely such as getting to the gym, training for bicycle races, enjoying time with children, or running general errands. A few responses also identified that there is a desire to use bicycling for travel and errand purposes but due to a lack of infrastructure they did not feel safe doing so.

Reason for Cycling	Responses	Percentage
Health and/or Recreation	335	77.01%
Commuting to work	37	8.51%
School/College	4	0.92%
Environmental concerns	46	10.57%
Budget	13	2.99%
Lack of access to other forms of transportation	10	2.30%
Other	32	7.36%

Barriers to Cycling

As highlighted in this plan, many roadways in the SMMPO region are not currently conducive to safe bicycling. Because of this, the survey asked respondents to identify reasons that prevented them from bicycling. Many respondents chose to skip this question as they do regularly use bicycle transportation. Unsurprisingly, however, road conditions were a top answer, with a lack of proper bicycle facilities close behind those who may not regularly ride a bicycle. Responses in the category of "other" included time constraints, a preference for walking, health condition, or not being interested in bicycling.

Barriers to Cycling	Responses	Percentage	Percent of Respondents
Unsafe Road Conditions (ex: car speeds, heavy traffic, etc.)	58	13.33%	37.91%
Lack of bicycle facilities (ex: shared-use path, bike lane, etc.)	38	8.74%	24.84%
Lack of access to bicycle	12	2.76%	7.84%
Lack of bicycle racks/parking	8	1.84%	5.23%
Fear	10	2.3%	6.54%
Other	27	6.21%	17.65%

General Comments

In order to give respondents a chance to express desired improvements and expansions for bicycling infrastructure in their towns and cities, a final open response option was provided for additional comments. Responses to this question are sorted by town below.

Municipality	Themes of General Comments Received
Acushnet	• Provision of protected bike lanes and traffic calming infrastructure on all main roads
Attleboro	• Lack of bike paths create safety concerns • Connections to nearby towns • Improved maintenance of roadways and paint on roadways to enhance safety
Berkley	• Accommodations on Bayview Ave, Padelford St, Myricks St, Elm St • Windy and narrow roads create unsafe conditions for cyclists
Carver	• Bicycle accommodations on major roads
Dartmouth	• Bike path needed behind airport on New Plainville Rd connecting to Old Fall River Rd • Addition of bike paths to projects involving Route 6 and connected roadways • Shoulders wide enough for bike lanes • Review of speed limits and enforcement to make roads safer for biking
Dighton	• Creation of bikeway on major roadways and connections to Town Hall and Bristol County Agricultural High School • Connection to Fall River's future MBTA station • Pathways safe enough for all age groups • Widening of roads to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel • Repair of the railroad bridge near Sweet Knoll State Park to be useable for bikes • Connection to Warren, Rhode Island • Bike path to connect Somerset and Taunton
Fairhaven	• Connections to Mattapoisett and the Cape Cod Canal • Improved connections to public transit stations • Better maintenance on existing bike paths • Bicycle accommodations provided on Main Street
Fall River	• Bike connections to and between Westport and Dartmouth
Lakeville	• Additional accommodations provided on Marion Rd connection with Middleborough • Bike paths that are incorporated into Lakeville's nature areas

Municipality	Themes of General Comments Received
Mansfield	• Dedicated bike lanes on roads connected to biking/hiking trails. • Bike path connecting local area to Mansfield Airport • Bike lanes or additional accommodations to cross Route 140 to access businesses • Bike lanes or additional accommodations to cross Route 106 near MBTA Station • Extension/expansion of the Veteran's Memorial Trail • Improved pavement conditions on roadways such as Fruit St and Stearns Ave • Extension of bike path to connect the Mansfield Airport to downtown Mansfield
Marion	• Addition of bike path to connect Marion and Mattapoisett • Access to retail opportunities
Mattapoisett	• Protected bicycle lanes on Route 6 connecting to bike path
Middleborough	• Dedicated trails and recreational areas to give cyclists space to use off roadways • Pathways that remove cyclists from higher speed roadways • Rail trail conversion projects • Connections from Middleborough to Massasoit State Park
New Bedford	• Better crossing options on County St and Route 18 • Additional bicycle accommodations in the northern part of city to connect with new lanes on Ashley Blvd • More protected bike lanes • More connections for bikes to MBTA station
North Attleborough	• Bike facilities provided on main streets • Starting of a safe routes to school program • Provision of a bike lane on Hoppin Hill Ave and Rte. 120 • Regular maintenance and cleaning of shoulders to ensure bicyclist safety • Move cyclists off roadways to dedicated paths • Form a connection to Metacomet Greenway • More recreational biking opportunities • Use of old railroad beds for a rails to trails conversion • Elm St and Commonwealth Ave from Rte. 1 to North Ave should be considered for bicycle facilities • Connection between Attleboro Falls and the MBTA station
Norton	• Bike lane along Rte. 140 looping around Reservoir St • Bike connections on all major roadways • Dean St bike path • Connections to Mansfield and Easton • Completion of the Mansfield-Norton Rail Trail • Connections to Taunton improved for cyclists • Additional facilities around the Norton Reservoir • Additional facilities on Maple St, John Scott Blvd, Dean St, and W. Hodges St

Municipality	Themes of General Comments Received
Plainville	• Move cyclists off roadways onto separated paths • Bike lanes on Rte. 1A to connect to nearby shopping opportunities
Raynham	• Additional facilities on Elm St east • More trails for bikes only throughout Bristol County
Rehoboth	• Better accommodations for number of bicyclists on roadways without accommodations • Separate pathways for bicycles to use due to size constraints on many roadways • Connections to Seekonk
Rochester	• Bicycle connections and accommodations around Snipatuit Pond
Somerset	• More bicycle accommodations along the Taunton River • Connections between Somerset and Dighton • Improved accommodations on narrow local roads like Elm St
Swansea	• Connection to East Bay Bike Path • More bike parking and lock stations • Additional accommodations to and around schools • Accommodations on Rte. 118, Locust St, Hortonville Rd, Sharps Lot Rd, Rte. 6
Taunton	• Additional bike connections along the Taunton River • More connections in the area of Route 79 and Precinct St
Wareham	• Connection from the Cape Cod Canal to Onset • Improved accommodations for cyclists around roundabouts • Bicycle connections to commuter rail line in Wareham • Connections to surrounding towns • Improved biking opportunities in the Narrows Area • Improved conditions on Route 6 for cyclists
Westport	• Bicycle accommodations on Route 177
Outside of Region	• Increased dedicated bicycle facilities off-road to accommodate handcycles • Improved connections to/around Providence and Plymouth/Cape Cod • Trail network to and from Bridgewater with existing space • Route 105 between Middleboro and Halifax could use additional facilities and roadway maintenance to ensure cyclists have space

Individual Community Projects

The following is a table of Complete Streets, Shared Streets & Spaces, and MassTrails grants awarded to SMMPO region municipalities from 2019 to 2022. These grants convey many of the local walking and biking project priorities of communities across the region.

Municipality	Shared Streets Award &Description	Complete Streets Award &Description (If available)	MassTrails Award & Description
Acushnet	2020: $12,917 to provide access to a public park from the Slocum Street corridor along River Street by installing a new path		
Attleboro	2022: $35,013 Snow removal equipment for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. 2021: $122,149 to support new lighting, paving, landscaping, public seating, public art, and bicycle racks to transform an under-used alleyway between Attleboro's municipal parking garage and the downtown area into a safe and comfortable public space capable of hosting civic activities and festivals		2022: $50,000 to upgrade visitors' trail experiences through a phased series of site improvements to: design, permit, and construct an All Persons trail from the parking lot through gardens to an accessible platform overlooking a freshwater marsh.
Dartmouth	2022: $75,250 To transform a parking lot into a year-long pop-up space featuring attractions such as ice skating, food and drink vendors, seating, outdoor firepits, and patio heaters.	2018: $200,000 The Milton Street Sidewalk Improvements will construct a new sidewalk along Milton Street from Slocum Road to Potter Street and Sharp Street. These improvements will eliminate a gap in the pedestrian network connecting the Bliss Corner neighborhoods to the recreational facilities along Slocum Road and provide an accessible route through these neighborhoods.	
Dighton	2021: $118,839 to construct curb ramps, ADA-compliant curb cuts, accessible sidewalks, and delineated crosswalks throughout town 2020: $168,242 To extend an existing sidewalk, allowing for safer connections among residential neighborhoods, a playground, the Post Office, a child-care center, the Dighton Public Library, a local church, and a main commercial area.	2020: $277,442 for new sidewalk and high visibility crosswalks at Center Street and Elementary/Middle School intersection. Ugrading and extending the existing sidewalk on Pearl Street. Bicycle signage installed on ten roads throughout the town to encourage motorists to share the road.	
Fairhaven	2021: $183,689 to install safer pedestrian crossings for two high-volume/high-speed streets – one near Livesey Park and one at downtown end of Phoenix Trail – to include pedestrian safety beacons, new signage, and enhanced markings	2022: $332,636 To conduct a lane diet and add buffered bike lanes along Alden and Howland Roads to Bridge Street, as well as to provide crosswalk improvements, new bus shelters, and speed feedback signs at various locations.	
Fall River	2022: $49,900 for pedestrian- activated warning devices/crossing signals and $46,500.00 for traffic signals. 2021: $229,257 to install new bike lanes; pedestrian crossings, ADA-compliant ramps, and safety flashing beacons; and new wayfinding directed at bicyclists, to create better connections to future East Coast Greenway and existing Quequechan Rail Trail	2020: $399,925 William S. Canning Blvd Multimodal Improvements: narrow travel lanes, construction of sidewalks; adjustment of the curb to provide for bicycle lanes; ADA compliant intersection control at three intersections, crosswalks, pavement lines, and stormwater enhancements.	2022: $268,132 to construct an extension of the Quequechan River Rail Trail, including construction of a 550-foot long shared use path that runs along a city owned abandoned railroad right-of-way adjacent to South Watuppa Pond. 2021: $42,950 Maintenance of the Bioreserve Loop Trail Project in Fall River and Freetown. A new visitor parking area to access both the Bioreserve Loop Trail and conservation lands to the south. 2021: $50,0000 for Construction of Copicut Accessible Nature Play Trail trail to the south with an existing WWII Veterans' Memorial Trail to the north that ties into the heart of the Downtown.
Mattapoisett	2020: $237,849 To provide a new, safe connection to the Mattapoisett Rail Trail and create a new safe route to Old Hammondtown Elementary School and areas of employment in Fairhaven	2021: $260,000 To redesign the intersection of the Mattapoisett Shared Used Path and Brandt Island Road to improve safety and comfort for all users, implement radar speed feedback signs, and construct a new sidewalk along Pearl Street.	2022: $120,000 for pre-design investigations including various routes, ROW acquisition, and construction financing of One- Mile Gap of Mattapoisett Bike & Ped Path. 2020: $110,000 to connect the Mattapoisett Rail Trail to the planned Marion Pathway to create a 20-mile, no-traffic/low traffic, bike, or pedestrian route from New Bedford to Wareham.
New Bedford			2019: $34,000 for Feasibility study to analyze and initiate designs to complete a critical gap in the New Bedford "Blue Lane" multimodal pathway network.
North Attleborough	2022: $37,825 For messaging signs. 2020: $28,984 To create outdoor parklets, reduce vehicle speeds from 25mph to 10mph, and install street furniture, all with easy access by low-income, senior, and affordable housing populations	2021: $385,871 To install new sidewalks, curb ramps, and high visibility crossings along Arnold Road as well as to provide sharrows and bike signage near two elementary schools.	
Norton	2022: $41,800 For snow removal equipment for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.		

Municipality	Shared Streets Award &Description	Complete Streets Award &Description (If available)	MassTrails Award & Description
Plainville	2022: $44,800 To install solar- powered RRFBs at two existing crosswalks at elementary schools on Route 106.		
Raynham	2022: $38,650 To narrow N. Main St/Route 104 to accommodate 5-foot bike lanes and restripe crosswalks, signage and construct ADA- compliant curb ramps at major intersections. 2022: $50,000 for snow removal equipment for ped & bicycle facilities. 2021: $137,420 To improve connectivity for walkers in the Pleasant St corridor by narrowing the road and installing traffic calming, 10 new pedestrian safety beacons, 12 new crosswalks, & 8 new ADA-compliant ramps	2023: $400,000 For a shared use path with accessible ramps, crosswalks, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons. The shared use path will provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the Raynham Senior Center, the Public Safety Building, and the Borden Colony Play fields.	
Rochester	2022: $50,000 Speed feedback/ messaging signs.		
Seekonk	2021: $50,000 To install new ADA-compliant sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, and guardrails on Arcade Avenue		
Somerset	2021: $32,100 To extend a bike lane developed with $$ from a previous Shared Streets and Spaces grant along Read St, for better connections to the South Coast Bikeway 2020: $12,100 To support dedicated bike lanes along Brayton Avenue and Read Street to promote outdoor activity and provide additional transportation options	2020: $400,000 Improve access and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists on Riverside Avenue by narrowing travel lanes, constructing a continuous sidewalk on the river side, installing raised crosswalks and shared-lane markings for cyclists.	
Swansea	2022: $32,063 Speed feedback/ messaging signs. 2021: $36,679 To complete a walkway that connects schools with ballfields and pedestrians/cyclists with scenic views and to bike and walking trails and municipal buildings	2022: $396,609 To install a sidewalk with curb ramps along the west side of Bark Street in addition to on-road bicycle lanes.	
Taunton	2022: $99,000 To improve crosswalks on Main St by adding push-button RRFBs, high-visibility pavement markings, & in-street portable pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of crosswalks. 2022: $50,000 for snow removal equipment for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. 2021: $4,000 To extend the sidewalk on Main St in downtown Taunton, providing space for 12 tables to facilitate public gathering, outdoor dining & install traffic calming and safety signage 2020: $150,000 To provide traffic calming, enhanced pedestrian safety, and ADA- accessibility measures at a dangerous three-way intersection used by elementary, middle, and high school students	2022: $400,000 For improvements on Weir Street between First Street and Harrison Street. Improvements include the addition of painted bicycle lanes, road resurfacing, and reconstructed sidewalks.	
Wareham	2021: $91,060 To install a bus shelter, street furniture, & landscaping to encourage use of local bus services. Will also install pedestrian safety improvements including a wooden guardrail, solar powered light poles, public bike repair station to support non-vehicular travel 2020: $41,500 To promote the creative use of the public space in downtown Wareham by transforming the historic train station in Wareham Village into an entertainment, food and hospitality area		2020: $50,000 for engineering, planning, sitework, materials, amenities, and maintenance of Wareham trail networks. Will also fund small machinery for mowing, brush removal, and forestry services.
Westport			

Recommendations & Action Steps

The recommendations and actions steps identified below should be prioritized over the coming years to improve bicycle transportation in the SMMPO region. Action Steps are broken into the following categories: Safety, Equity, Transit, Data & Monitoring, Outreach, Economy, Connectivity, Land Use, Funding, and Route Planning. Additional recommendations, suggestions, and other guidance can be found throughout this plan.

Safety

- Assist municipalities in creating bicycle and pedestrian committees
- Assist municipalities in adopting and implementing the Safe Systems Approach to the planning, design, construction, and use of their local transportation networks
- Assist municipalities in participating in MassDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program and increase number of participating schools over time
- Assist municipalities in planning, implementing, and gathering data from small scale traffic calming demonstration projects
- Advance the adoption of traffic calming infrastructure or other safety improvements along bicycle and pedestrian corridors or unsafe roadway crossings
- Assist municipalities in planning bikeway networks and selecting appropriate bikeway types by utilizing guidance in the Federal Highway Administration's Bikeway Selection Guide and MassDOT's Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide.

Equity

- Encourage local municipalities to make their Complete Street planning and prioritization process open and accessible to the public, particularly to underrepresented groups and bikeway advocates
- Consider adopting the Transportation Hierarchy as the overarching framework for the SMMPO transportation system, which prioritizes walking, rolling, and bicycling due to these modes having the greatest risk of injury, and therefore needing the greatest level of protection against crashes
- Prioritize bicycle facility improvements in neighborhoods that experience higher health disparities
- Assist communities in planning and implementing income-eligible E-Bike incentive programs, using the Cape Light Compact E-Bike Incentive Program as an example
- Explore opportunities to support used bike refurbishment and free or low-cost equitable distributions in the region such as Mattapoisett's Bike for All program, which distributes refurbished bikes to children and adults along the South Coast region
- Increase outreach and recruitment of transportation disadvantaged community members on bicycle committees, advocacy groups, other bikeway-aligned groups, and bicycle-related events and programs

Transit

- Assist GATRA and SRTA in planning, procuring, and siting bike racks for bus stops
- Assist municipalities and regional transit authorities in developing or implementing bike-related items in RTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines, or enhancing transit stops with bike parking and other amenities
- Assist GATRA and SRTA in identifying priority locations for implementation of floating bus stops, and collaborate with municipalities on including these locations into Complete Streets planning efforts
- Collaborate with and encourage the MBTA to allow bicycles to be taken on peak-hour trains, and enhance bike or other micro mobility storage amenities, such as multipurpose storage lockers at MBTA stations
- Work with the MBTA and Regional Transit Authorities to advance bicycle-friendly policies and accommodations on trains, buses, and at transit stations, and provide more information on bicycle policies and available infrastructure on wayfinding signage, as well as on their websites, social media, and other online or printed materials
- Prioritize bike infrastructure improvements that connect to transit routes and help make bicycling and transit more viable transportation options. Plan for and construct bicycle infrastructure on planned roadways upgrades in the vicinity of existing or proposed senior and multifamily housing developments and mixed-use districts.

Data & Monitoring

- Continue to assist communities in utilizing data and GIS mapping in bikeway planning, and to coordinate data sharing between municipalities, state agencies, and the SMMPO
- Continue to refine and expand upon SRPEDD's Regional Trail Mapping Project
- Identify priority areas within the regional bike network needing bicycle or pedestrian user counts, and install, monitor, and maintain counter equipment at these locations
- Identify the number of miles of bike lanes and shared use path in the SMMPO region, and consider the adoption of goals at the SMMPO to increase the total completed distance of this infrastructure over specific periods of time
- Identify and pursue additional data collections needs to monitor and quantify the benefits of increased bicycle and micro mobility ridership in the region
- Collaborate with road and mountain bike riding groups, events, and commonly used group riding routes in the region to identify their locations, how many participants they regularly involve, and any potential infrastructure projects to enhance their programs and activities
- Consider incorporating the condition status of high-priority segments of sidewalks, bike lanes, or shared use paths into the SRPEDD's regular data collection and monitoring efforts
- Expand SRPEDD's regional bicycle infrastructure data and GIS mapping database to provide public access to data and GIS maps on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as well as to provide for crowdsource data gathering opportunities for problem areas, or for gathering data related to specific projects such as safety concerns, population served, recreation or commuter value, local interest and support, nearby points of interest, transit stops, and connectivity opportunities
- Identify and map locations that youth and other transportation disadvantaged groups already visit by bicycle/alternative modes of transportation

Outreach

- Continue to provide technical assistance to local and regional bicycle groups and committees and promote SRPEDD's Community Technical Assistance program to provide formal recommendations to communities on advancing segments of their local bike networks
- Engage stakeholders throughout the planning process, including bicyclists, advocacy groups, community-based organizations, transportation agencies, and municipal staff
- Increase engagement and public participation, particularly from underrepresented groups and advocates for active transportation, on the Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) and Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO).
- Consider implementation of a yearly, biennial, or quarterly summit with representatives from SMMPO region bicycle groups to share regional updates, knowledge, best practices, and promote networking and bicycle route interconnectivity between communities
- Assist local governments and organizations in promoting the availability of board or committee seats on local bike and pedestrian planning committees and groups
- Explore opportunities to expand youth and adult bicycle education programs, community dialogues, and methods available for reporting safety hazards within the region's transportation network, prioritize communities that experience disproportionate transportation disadvantage
- Develop and implement equitable multilingual community engagement activities to intentionally gather input from communities of diverse identities and experiences
- Develop and distribute guidelines and best practices for bicycle infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, funding, and installation to ensure the long-term upkeep of the regional bicycle network

Economy

- Identify ways to quantify the economic benefits of existing bikeways within the SMMPO region
- Evaluate economic impacts of bikeways and incorporate notable bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Provide guidance and resources to municipal planning and economic development staff in attracting and incentivizing bicycle-related businesses in the region, such as bike shops or bike tourism industry
- Identify barriers to advancing bike tourism in the region and assist the Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, Business Districts, the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, and other local tourism agencies and institutions in providing resources and knowledge of safe cycling routes to align with regional tourism attractions, visitor lodging, local food businesses, bikeshares, bike rentals, and bike-related businesses

Connectivity

- Provide technical assistance to communities in planning bicycle networks, or the creation of active transportation plans, transit plans, micro mobility plans, or other planning related to active transportation infrastructure
- Regularly consult with MassDOT, RIDOT, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Cape Cod Commission (CCC), and the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning to discuss issues regarding inter-regional bike route connectivity
- Assist communities with participation in MassDOT's Complete Streets Program, including regularly updating Complete Streets Prioritization Plans with an emphasis on advancing high-priority segments of planned local bikeways

Connectivity (continued)

- Continue to monitor and advance opportunities to implement bicycle or micromobility sharing programs across the region or within specific municipalities
- Expand the use of bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding signage within the region
- Identify barriers to connectivity in the region and assist communities in initiating plans and projects to address them in both the short and long term

Land Use

- Provide technical assistance to municipalities during the development of local zoning rules, regulations, and bylaws, particularly as they relate to walkability and bikeability
- Provide technical assistance to municipalities in developing programs to incentivize the installation of bicycle amenities at new development or redevelopment sites including but not limited to bike storage, outlets for e-bike charging, bathroom facilities with showers, bike repair stations, and signage
- Collaborate with MassDOT and other agencies to gather information and data on railroad and utility rights-of-way within the SMMPO region for shared use path planning efforts to identify where conditions are conducive for their construction
- Provide technical assistance to communities in updating local parking bylaws and policies to eliminate parking minimums, create parking maximums, and prioritize walkability and bikeablilty over single-occupancy vehicle storage where appropriate
- Consider assessing parking utilization rates in specific high priority areas to quantify excess parking capacity in local communities that could be better used to support active transportation and provide space for more sustainable land uses
- Incorporate climate change considerations into the bikeway planning process

Funding

- Assist municipalities in initiating bicycle facilities improvement projects through the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT), and work to identify and remedy barriers to entry for this project initiation process
- Implement the SMMPO's goal to allocate at least 10% from the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) regional target funds for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements and analyze and report on the ongoing results of this goal
- Assist communities in grant applications for MassTrails, Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, Safe Routes to Schools, and other funding programs
- Create a Bikeway Planning & Funding Guide for municipalities in the SMMPO region to potentially include, but not be limited to, information and recommendations on the bikeway planning process, a wide range information on grants and other funding opportunities, as well as information on the TIP
- Encourage the development of additional state level sources of funding specific to the development of high-comfort bikeways and shared use paths, particularly for right-of-way acquisition. Costs associated with any right of way takings necessary for bikeway development are the sole responsibility of the host municipality and are one of the greatest barriers to implementing bicycle infrastructure as they are one of the most difficult pieces of the process to fund
- Update the TIP evaluation criteria to better reflect the benefits of bicycle projects, such as shared use paths
- Investigate feasibility and interest in sharing equipment amongst the region's municipalities related to bicycle and pedestrian projects to reduce costs associated with those projects

Route Planning

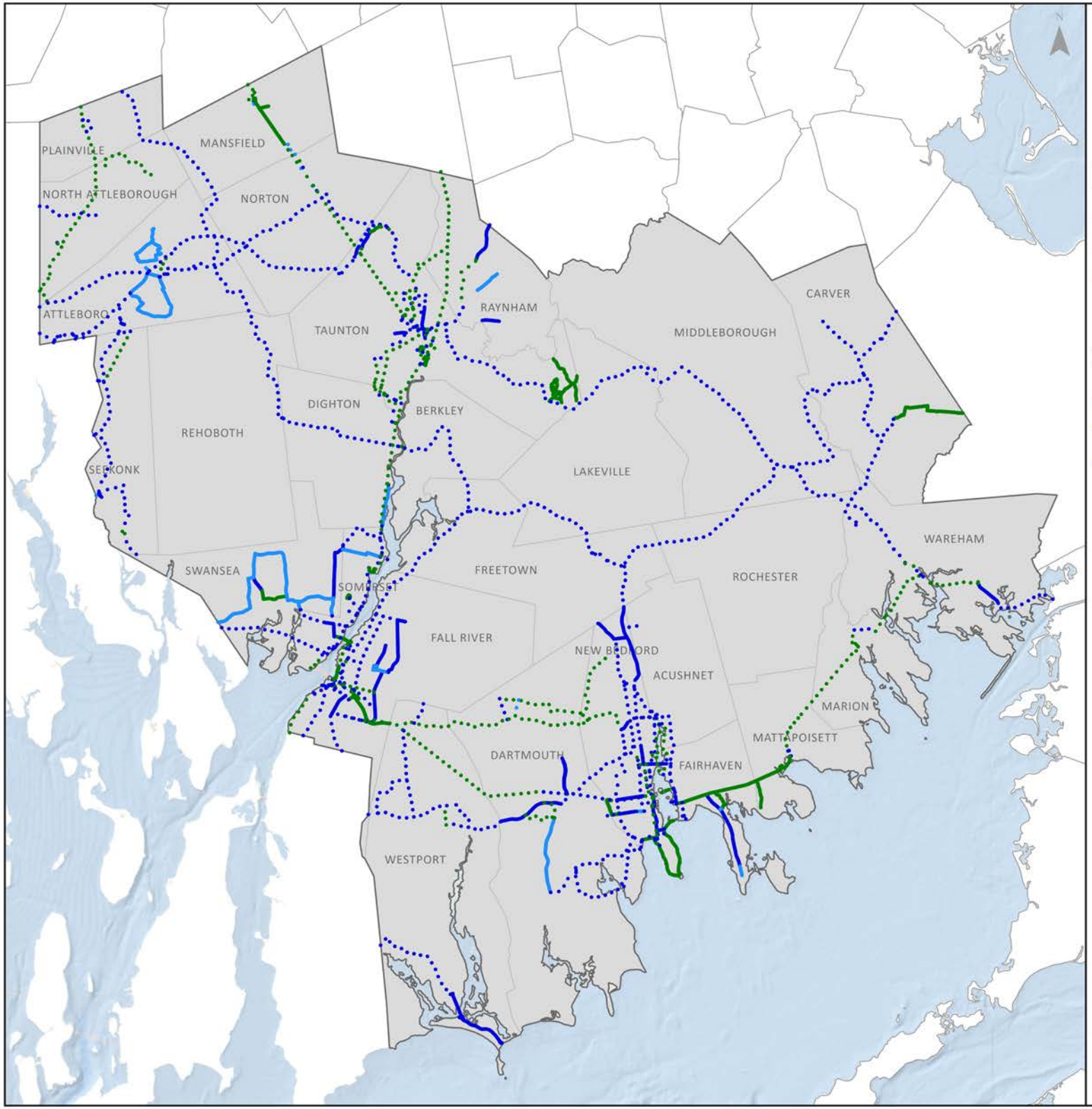
There are many factors that go into selecting a bikeway route. These factors include, but are not limited to: land availability, rights-of-way, safety concerns, presence of wetlands or other natural or cultural resources, ADA accessibility, proximity to bike trip generators, roadway and sidewalk conditions, road classification, road layout, jurisdiction, surrounding land uses, on-street parking, average daily traffic and truck volumes, signage, and utility poles. Bike routing decisions are made based off the best available course of action, but usually involve scenarios with a range of tradeoffs.

With route planning, the goal is to close gaps in the bike network as identified in the Regional Bike Networks section of this plan, as well as listed below, while remaining agile and flexible to potential alternative viable routes that may be identified through future bikeway planning efforts with local officials and community stakeholders. To help realize a regionally connected high-comfort bikeway network, SMMPO staff has identified the following gaps in the region's existing bicycle network:

- Advance any bike infrastructure or paths proposed in the region's municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans or Complete Streets Prioritization Plans
- Identify potential additions to the MassTrails Priority Network Map of a north-south route(s) between SRPEDD, OCPC, and/or MAPC communities to connect the South Coast Bikeway, Taunton River Trail, and World War II Veterans Memorial Trail to points north
- Attleboro & Norton – Connect a bikeway along Route 123 from the Rhode Island state border east through downtown Attleboro to the Mansfield/Norton Bike Path. This route should be considered for bike improvements as this state route can provide a linkage between the Mansfield/Norton Bike Path and the Blackstone River Bikeway, which is Rhode Island's second-longest bike path, with 18.2 miles of shared use path. An additional south connector from Route 123 could create a bikeway to the South Attleboro MBTA Station
- Mansfield – need for collaborative planning efforts with the Town of Foxborough and MAPC to develop a feasibility study to plan a northern extension of the WWII Veterans Memorial Trail along the MBTA's railroad right-of-way into Foxborough to connect into Gillette Stadium
- North Attleboro & Plainville – work with the Towns on planning and funding related to advancing the Ten Mile River Trail / Metacomet Greenway
- Middleborough – work with the Town to advance a bike network within Downtown Middleborough and connecting into Pratt Farm and/or the Nemasket River
- Somerset & Attleboro – Support the formation of a municipal committee or citizens group to assist in planning the implementation of bikeways in these communities
- Taunton, Dighton, Raynham, and Norton – support additional feasibility analysis, prioritization, and funding for bike routes connecting the northern portions of the Taunton River Trail to enhance connectivity, including connections to the World War II Veterans Memorial Trail in Norton and Route 138 and points north in Raynham
- Middleborough – connect the downtown to the Middleboro/Lakeville Commuter Rail Station and recreational areas such as Pratt Farm
- Dighton & Somerset – create a safe bicycle and pedestrian connection along the railroad corridor or Pleasant Street to link these communities near Broad Cove
- Somerset – connect the South Coast Bikeway and Taunton River Trail. Additional bicycle pathways along Riverside Avenue, Pleasant Street, High Street, Main Street, County, and/or South Street could connect residents along the waterfront and advance a north-south connection from Broad Cove to Village Waterfront Park, Pierce Beach, Slade's Ferry Crossing District, and Brayton Point
- Westport, Dartmouth, and New Bedford – connect the Quequechan River Rail Trail in Fall River to New Bedford via the Northern Scenic Greenway through Westport, Dartmouth, and northern New Bedford.

Barriers (continued)

- UMass Dartmouth to Westport and New Bedford - continue to advance sections of the South Coast Bikeway along Route 6 and provide connections from the UMass Dartmouth campus to Dartmouth, Westport, and New Bedford
- Downtown New Bedford & Fairhaven – connect the existing and planned New Bedford HarborWalk, CoveWalk, Blue Lane, and RiverWalk to the Phoenix Bike Trail in Fairhaven
- Acushnet to New Bedford / Fairhaven – connect Acushnet Center to the South Coast Bikeway via New Bedford or Fairhaven
- Mattapoisett, Marion, & Wareham – connect the Mattapoisett Rail Trail to the Cape Cod Canal
- Carver to Wareham – connect Carver and the Myles Standish State Forest to the Wareham Village MBTA Station and the South Coast Bikeway.
- Fall River – enhance bicyclist and pedestrian safety and advance the South Coast Bikeway by improving connectivity between the Quequechan River Rail Trail, Fall River Heritage State Park, Kennedy Park, and other areas along the waterfront and downtown. Streets needing additional bicycle facilities include Bedford Street, Rodman Street, Columbia Street, Plymouth Avenue, Pleasant Street, and Robeson Street
- Fall River to Tiverton – Link Fall River to Rhode Island's emerging Aquidneck Island Bikeway by pursuing shared use path along the Mount Hope Bay Greenway.
- Seekonk & Attleboro to Rhode Island – Link these communities to Rhode Island's Blackstone River Greenway, East Bay Bike Path, and Ten Mile River Greenway
- Seekonk & Attleboro to North Attleborough, Swansea, and Norton – connect Seekonk and Attleboro to the World War II Veteran's Memorial Trail, Ten Mile River Trail, and South Coast Bikeway
- Tiverton and Little Compton, RI to Fall River & Westport – plan connections south into Rhode Island via Route 81 and 138 in Fall River, and west into Route 177 and Adamsville Road in Westport
- Warren, RI to Swansea & Somerset – Connect Old Warren Road in Swansea to Schoolhouse Road and Long Lane in Warren, RI. Consider improvements to Route 103 (Wilbur Ave) and explore feasibility of a pathway along the former railroad corridor to the east of the East Bay Bike Path and Warren Bike Path that continues to Swansea's Town Beach and could reach as far as Brayton Point in Somerset via the former railroad
- Rehoboth to Dighton – explore feasibility of creating shared use path along Route 44 or 118. Further explore the feasibility of connecting the former trolley railroad in Rehoboth Village to the Taunton River Trail in Dighton via County Street in Rehoboth, and Wellington Street, Brook Street, Elm Street, and Route 138 in Dighton
- Seekonk – coordinate with the State of Rhode Island to enhance bikeway connections from Route 152 to Route 15, to Ten Mile River Greenway. Also explore feasibility of connection from Arcade Ave to Route 152, to Bishop Ave, to Ferris Ave, to the Ten Mile River Greenway
- Attleboro – Improve bike connections to downtown, the Attleboro MBTA station, as well as the South Attleboro MBTA Station for residents of Attleboro and Pawtucket. Existing sidewalks on Route 1 and 1A may not provide enough width for safe bike travel from Pawtucket towards the South Attleboro station. The following proposed bikeways will greatly enhance bikeability to the station for both communities:
    - Route 1, to Scott Street, to Collins Street, to South Attleboro MBTA Station
    - Route 1, to Turner Street, to Mendon Road, to Collins Street, to South Attleboro MBTA Station
    - County Street, to Captain Courtois Drive, to George Ide Drive, to Annex Drive, to the access road behind Market Basket, to the South Attleboro MBTA Station
    - Newport Ave (Route 1A) to Collins Street



Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Off Road Separate Use Path
- On Road Bicycle Lane
- On Road Shared Lane Marking

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

Sources: SRPEDD, MassGIS, ESRI
Date: October 2023
Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes.

The following major routes and intersections were identified as major barriers to bicycle transportation:

- Highways/Ramps – Highways in the SMMPO region, specifically Interstates 495, 95, 195, 295, and Routes 140 & 24, prohibit bicycle access due to high speeds and volumes. While access should be prohibited for those reasons, there are also significant challenges present for crossing these highways and for crossing access ramps along roads.
- Routes 1, 28, 6, 44, 105, 123, and 138 – These corridors have very limited bicycle facilities but are, in many cases, the only option for accessing major employment, retail, transit and other priority destinations. They vary in composition in regard to lane layout, speed and other factors, but they all present a challenge for cyclists due to lack of safe infrastructure, safe crossing mechanisms, and general bicycle friendliness. In some cases, bicycle travel is prohibited.
    - Route 6 – overbuilt in many areas with four vehicle travel lanes, limited bike or pedestrian accommodations, and poses safety risks for the South Coast Bikeway route when it crosses or passes through this route
    - Route 44 – cross access safety issues at intersections in Middleborough, Carver, Raynham, Taunton, and Seekonk
    - Route 105 – The overpass for Route 495 creates challenges for increasing bike connectivity between Lakeville and the new Middleborough MBTA Station.
    - Proposed trail crossing for the South Coast Bikeway (Route 6, 118, 18, 28), the Taunton River Trail (Route 44 and 138), Mansfield/Norton Path (Route 106 and 123) and Ten Mile River Trail (Route 120, 1A) could create potential challenges based on the volume and speed of the road crossing or physical barrier these roadways create.

Conclusion

While the analysis, planning, and engagement for this bike plan has occurred over the course of the past year, the SMMPO Regional Bike Plan is the result of many years of dedication and intentional actions towards improving the bikeways of the region – dating back as far as 1976. Through implementation, this plan will help the SMMPO region achieve the vision for a safe, connected, and regionwide bicycle network that will enable significant growth in bike ridership.

This plan and its recommendations provide a framework for the SMMPO to enhance the regionwide bicycle network. The SMMPO and its partner municipalities and community-based organizations all have important roles to play in supporting initiatives that meet the needs of people biking in southeastern Massachusetts, including the needs identified in this document. This plan is designed to be flexible, providing sufficient direction while also encouraging the SMMPO to respond as future opportunities present themselves.
Learn more about ways you can get involved to help to make your community's transportation system safer for bicyclists, more sustainable, connected, efficient, and better able to meet the needs of all users by visiting srpedd.org/transportation